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Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *Naqa'id* Performance as Social Commentary

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Dedication

To my children, who have never known a father who is not “in school.”

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Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *Naqa'id* Performance as Social Commentary

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The pre-Islamic genre of poetry known as *naqā'iḍ* (flytings) was performed as a contest between two competing poets representing opposing tribes and served the important social function of determining tribal supremacy: the winning poet's tribe was victorious and the contest itself sometimes replaced an actual battle. In the Umayyad era, however, tribal sedentarization coupled with the advent of Islam contributed to social changes as the landscape became more and more citied. The result was a realignment of traditional tribal relations that changed the context of *naqā'iḍ* poetry. Yet the genre survived. Scholars have dismissed Umayyad-era *naqā'iḍ* poetry as a form of entertainment with little purpose, but have failed to explain on what terms it persisted through the Umayyad era.

This dissertation examines the effects of the cultural gradations that had been occurring from pre-Islamic times through the Umayyad era on the *naqā'iḍ* genre by examining the *naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. Their new discourse represented a departure from the traditional, agonistic *naqā'iḍ* of the pre-Islamic era. I compare the discourse of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* to other diverse lampoon genres, among

them the “Dozens,” to illustrate literary theoretical issues they raise. I use Goffman’s concept of “team collusion” to illustrate how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq “colluded” to promote interest in their performances and maintain suspense for their audience. Using Bauman’s theory of “emergence” I show that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq performed the *naqā’iḍ* as comic entertainment for their audience, which allowed the poets to gain influence over them. The *naqā’iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq represent a form of negotiating the turmoil of tribal relations via tribal competition and social satire in an increasingly urbanizing world.

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Introduction

PROBLEM / SIGNIFICANCE

The urbanization that accompanied the expansion of the Islamic empire in the Umayyad era brought about gradual changes that affected Umayyad society and culture. In this new milieu traditional tribal bonds competed with new associations fostered by cities. The effects of these changes are evident in the satirical poetry of the era. The *naqā'iḍ* are a form of Arabic satire (*hijā'*), which in the pre-Islamic era referred to a poetic contest between two poets representing their respective tribes, who tried to outdo each other in a verbal battle by vaunting their own tribe and denouncing their opponent's. These verbal battles were serious business, and affected the status of the tribes involved. In the Islamicized and urbanizing environment of the Umayyad period, however, the changing dynamics of tribal relations was accompanied by changes in *naqā'iḍ* poetry. Scholars have dismissed Umayyad-era *naqā'iḍ* as a form of entertainment with little purpose, but if its function had become vitiated, its persistence is inexplicable. This dissertation seeks to fill a gap in Arabic literary scholarship through a study of the *naqā'iḍ* of Umayyad-era poets Jarīr and al-Farazdaq by addressing how these poets created from a pre-Islamic and archaic genre a vibrant poetry that reflected the societal and cultural changes of their time.

THESIS

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq lampooned each other with *naqā'iḍ* poetry before an audience at Mirbad in Basra, Iraq. I argue that this poetry was a new, performance-based lampoon that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq used as a vehicle to negotiate tribal relations in a changing society. I will show that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq constructed a new, hyperbolic, comic-bacchic discourse that appealed to their audience, and that gave the poets a measure of control over the audience. They used the influence they gained to negotiate tribal relationships in their increasingly urbanizing society via a poetic discourse of hyperbolic and comic lampoon. The shift in discourse was accompanied by a shift in focus, which moved from the poets themselves, to the audience, replacing the serious contest that determined the fate of tribes with an entertaining contest performed for the benefit of the spectators.

METHODS

Scholarship on Umayyad *naqā'iḍ* is scant. Those sources that do explore the topic tend to the descriptive, focusing on "facts," e.g. chronology of the poems, reconstruction of historical events, and sometimes reading of the poets' lives based on the text. The artistic aspects of the poetry, however, are understudied, and the art form itself is regarded as second rate to Western literature. To redress this problem my approach employs methods that draw out the performative and functional aspects of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry. I draw deliberately on the work of a number of authors whose work indicates itself to the

study of the *naqā'iḍ*. Bauman, first and foremost, articulates the "power inherent in performance to transform social structures" (*Verbal Art as Performance* 45). His approach allows me to study the relationship of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance to the audience. Bauman's focus on the role of performance in verbal art aids me in formulating a performance-oriented approach to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's lampoon poetry. I also draw heavily on Goffman (*The Presentation of Self in Every Day Life*) to examine how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq "colluded" to promote interest in their performances and maintain suspense for their audience. In addition to this, Goffman's concept of "given" versus "given off" information provides a theoretical foundation to explain how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq managed their image with regards to their audience during performance. Bouhdiba (*Sexuality in Islam*) provides a theoretical background for studying the *mujūn* themes found in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*. I use his model of male-bonding approaches to examine Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's discourse of anxiety in their misogynistic lampoon.

SYNOPSIS OF CHAPTERS

In the first chapter I survey the state of the field as it relates to *naqā'iḍ* studies, and I give an introduction to the genre and its conventions and also to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. After a brief discussion of the sources I explain my approach to the material and to its translation. The second half of the chapter deals with socio-economic circumstances and ideologies present in the Umayyad period, together with the reconfiguring of traditional tribal

relations in the face of a sedentarizing and Islamicizing society. Beginning with conditions in pre-Islamic Arabia I study the effects of urbanization and the expanding Islamic empire on tribal relations, as nomadic tribes sedentarized and the Islamic state established settlements known as *amṣār* (cantonments). I also address the topic of Islamicization, and the role of the Umma in replacing to a degree functions the tribe had formerly performed. This provides a background against which we may view the discourse of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry.

Chapter Two is a study of the discourse and reception of the *naqā'iḍ*. In this chapter I introduce a number of comparative lampoon genres in order to study literary theoretical issues they raise, which I then apply to the *naqā'iḍ*. Among these is the African-American poetic form of ritualized insult known as the "Dozens." The Dozens parallel the *naqā'iḍ* on several levels: they both employ hyperbolic sexual insults. Both are misogynistic. Both combine competitive aspects with entertainment.

I also explore Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's misogynistic and sexually explicit discourse, using Bouhdiba's theory. This analysis draws out the hyperbolic nature of the frequently sexual lampoon Jarīr and al-Farazdaq deploy against each other in their performance of *naqā'iḍ*.

Chapter Three focuses on Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's (most common) venue of performance, the Mirbad market in Basra, Iraq. I explore Mirbad as a stage on which Jarīr and al-Farazdaq performed a new, misogynistic and hyperbolic lampoon . This new

form of lampoon captivated the Mirbad audience, who became "caught up in it" (Bauman, *Verbal Art* 43), and allowed the poets a measure of control over the audience. I begin the chapter with an outline of the process of change the *naqā'iḍ* genre was undergoing from pre-Islamic times through the Umayyad era and explore the role that the sedentarization of tribes played in these changes. I also discuss the increased hyperbole that characterizes Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*, and the role Mirbad played in this new style of lampoon.

In Chapter Four I draw on Goffman's model of "team collusion" to answer how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq "colluded" to create a poetry that maintained audience interest over decades. In this chapter I analyze a number of poems from the *naqā'iḍ* to illustrate the themes, techniques and devices Jarīr and al-Farazdaq deployed in order to "collude." I also explore the relationship between the topics Jarīr and al-Farazdaq raise throughout the *naqā'iḍ* and their audience, and call on Bouhdiba to analyze the comic-bacchic hyperbole of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's new discourse.

In the final chapter I argue that the shift in function that occurred in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* was accompanied by a shift in direction of performance from a poet-oriented performance to an audience-oriented one. I show this through a study of *akhbār* (reports) as well as passages from the *naqā'iḍ* itself. I draw on *akhbār* sources in order to study Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's reception. These sources indicate that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq

were not performing against each other so much as they were performing for the audience, which shows a shift in the direction of performance.

SUMMATION

The results of this investigation show how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's discourse was changing from a pre-Islamic model of *naqā'iḍ* as they negotiated changes that were occurring in their society. The pre-Islamic practice of defending tribal honor now performed the function of negotiating the social upheaval that was occurring in the Umayyad era with its newly urbanizing and Islamicizing society. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq performed this changing *naqā'iḍ* before an audience on the stage of Mirbad. Their poetry performed the important function of negotiating old (tribal) relationships in a new urban culture. They were successful in part because they were able to "hook" their audience and draw them in, using traditional conventions of lampoon performance the audience recognized, while at the same time incorporating humorous hyperbole that constituted social satire. This, in turn, gave the poets influence over their audience.

Chapter 1

Naqā'iḍ from the Pre-Islamic to the Umayyad Periods

INTRODUCTION

This study came about not so much out of a single-minded focus on the poets, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq—although reading them, reciting them and listening to them (if only in my imagination) has occupied the greatest portion of my time for two or three years—as out of a realization that the scholarship on these two poets, although by far more abundant than any other Umayyad-era poets I have found, does not address important artistic issues, focusing instead on such inconsequential (and largely unknowable) matters as the chronological order of their poems (cf. Hussein) or the attempted reconstruction of the actual circumstances of performance (cf. Dayf, Jayyusi). This is a reflection of the state of Umayyad-era literary scholarship in general, which is far less copious than its Abbasid-era counterpart.

The choice of the *naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq was not made, however, solely based on the lack of scholarship on them or on the Umayyad period. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are, in fact, the most widely studied of the Umayyad-era poets, and are well known by speakers of Arabic in general. The critical issue is that in the *naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq we find a changing discourse of lampoon poetry which gives us insight not so much into the changes that were taking place in Umayyad society, but into how they were viewed from a distance. Transmitters of the *naqā'iḍ*, such as Abbasid

historians, for example, may have recorded—and even changed—only those portions of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's corpus that supported their conclusions about the Umayyads, making the extant poems more a reflection of their own ideology than of historical fact.

In choosing Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, I omit the third member of the Umayyad "triumvirate" of poets, al-Akhṭal (d. 710). The omission is more practical than ideological. The space constraints of the dissertation make even a thorough analysis of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* impracticable. Adding the output of a third poet would necessitate cutting even more of the current analysis centered on Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. In addition to this, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* are conventionally combined in a single edition, whereas al-Akhṭal is issued separately, due at least in part to the influence of Abū ʿUbayda (d. circa 825), whose compilation of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* is the primary original source extant. This has caused Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's names to become associated together in a way that al-Akhṭal's is not.

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were contemporaries, both having been born mid-seventh century C.E. Both also belonged to various branches of the Banū Tamīm tribe. Jarīr is known for his outstanding poetic ability, and was, according to Schaade, "one of the greatest Islamic-Arabic poets of all time." Al-Farazdaq is also known as an accomplished and prolific poet, with poems in a number of styles. Although each is known for various genres of works such as praise poems (*madīḥ*) and elegy (*marthiya*), the predominating type of poetry that made and still makes them famous—and that any

native speaker of Arabic is likely to think of upon hearing their names, especially when mentioned together—is the lampoon genre known as *naqā'iḍ*.

Derived from the verb "*nāqaḍa*," meaning "to contradict," *naqā'iḍ* or *munāqaḍāt* are "a form of poetic duelling in which tribal or personal insults are exchanged in poems, usually coming in pairs, employing the same metre and rhyme" (Van Gelder *Naḳā'iḍ*). The genre was a staple of the pre-Islamic period, and continued into the Umayyad, where it was made famous by Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. The topics the *naqā'iḍ* employ range from arguments arising from everyday affairs to the insulting of one's opponent and members of his tribe. The latter are especially prevalent in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, who deploy a hyperbolic variety of lampoon virtually unknown in pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ*. *Naqā'iḍ* can take a variety of forms, from simple and short, to the lengthy tripartite *qaṣīda*, the latter of which is the most common form employed by Jarīr and al-Farazdaq.

In pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* it is not uncommon to find *naqā'iḍ* contests centered on a topic of conflict between tribes. An example comes from the events leading up to the War of Bassūs, which Wasifi says "was a direct result of the appearance of the variety of *naqā'iḍ* that thrived and flourished in the milieu of battle" (15).[1] This prelude to war consisted of verses of a lampooning contest between the Yemenis and the tribes of Bakr and Taghlib over a seven-day battle they waged, which Bakr and Taghlib finally won.

[1] كانت سبباً مباشراً لظهور فن النقائض الذي نما وترعرع في أجواء المعارك.

Wasifi gives an example of a boast (*fakhr*) *naqīḍa*, in which a Yemeni Tubbaʿ boasts of his deeds, and those of his people, the Ḥimīr. He says:

By the swords of Ḥimīr with the tongues in its midst,

And the horses appear for a while and return. (Wasifi, 15)

بِسُيوفِ حِميرٍ والمَقاوِلُ وَسْطَها

والخَيْلُ تَبْدو ساعةً وتَعودُ

And later:

I stopped at Hawān for a while,

I journeyed, fought for a while, and defended them. (ibid. 16)

وَلَقَدْ نَزَلْتُ عَلى هَوانٍ حِقْبةً

أسْرى أُقاتِلُ ساعةً وَأذودُ

The language here is that of boasting and tribal pride. It is martial with the mention of swords, horses and fighting. These themes are not unknown in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*, but the latter frequently lace their poetry with hyperbolical, comic-bacchic lampoon that is not common in the pre-Islamic period. In the *naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq the insults are often more outrageous and the invective is intensified, while the duration of their forty-year lampoon battle suggests that settling disputes was a less

important consideration than providing an entertaining *performance* for their audience. Compare, for example, the following line from Poem 50, in which Jarīr lampoons al-Farazdaq on the topic of their poetic struggle, saying,

33- Did you not think, little son of poetry our war

After vigorous injury violently intense? (Bevan 1: 341)

أَبُنَيَّ شِعْرَةَ ما ظَنَنْتَ وَحَرْبنا

بَعْدَ المِراسِ شَديدَةُ الإِضْرارِ

It would not be unheard of for a poet to reference his opponent's poetry in a pre-Islamic *naqīḍa,* even though this type of lampoon seems to be more common in the Umayyad period. The thing that points towards a changing discourse in this line is a humorous double meaning Jarīr deploys. I have translated "*shiʿra*" in the first hemistich as "verse." More properly, the feminine termination "a" (*tā' marbūṭa*) of this word changes its meaning from "poetry" to "pubic hair." If we imagine this line delivered in performance, the audience would have heard "*shiʿr*," "poetry," "verse," first, followed by the feminine termination, which would have resulted in "*shiʿra*," changing its meaning to "pubic hair." This surprise may not have caused confusion in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's audience, but it almost certainly would have come across as humorous, the delayed, meaning altering "*tā' marbūṭa*" providing the punch line. Contrast this with the pre-Islamic example above, which is more direct and lacks audience-oriented comedy, and whose discourse suggests a no-frills approach to (poetic) tribal battles.

The major sources we have for Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* were compiled by Abū ʿUbayda (d. 823), who arranged the poems into what scholars assume is roughly chronological order, according to a large number of interlinear notations by Abū ʿUbayda concerning events the poems in question refer to, as well as a number of historical allusions in the poetry itself. The definitive reference for Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* is A. A. Bevan's edition of Abū ʿUbayda, which he compiled from three manuscripts dating from the twelfth, thirteenth and sixteenth centuries. The work was issued in three volumes between 1905 and 1912. The first two volumes consist of a printing of the poems in bold, numbered by line, with interlinear commentary, mostly from Abū ʿUbayda, but including later interlineations form various manuscripts, which consists of glosses (in Arabic) of *hapax legomena*, and other rare or idiomatic usage in addition to historical notations that add context to the poems. The third volume comprises an index of poems arranged according to rhyme and meter, "parallel and illustrative passages from other works," an excellent cross reference, an index of personal and tribal names, an index of place names, and an excellent glossary of rare and idiomatic usage throughout the *naqā'iḍ*. There is also an index of Persian words and phrases and a list of additions and corrections. Bevan provides no English translation, and the only translation I am aware of is a 1974 edition by Wormhoudt, which is riddled with inaccurate or non-idiomatic renderings. As such all translations are my own, a project which has accounted for a large portion of the work for this dissertation. I have approached these translations as literally as possible while still retaining an idiomatic English. I retain

tenses of verbs and person and number of adjective unless an obvious idiomatic difference exists between Arabic and English. There are times, however, when a slightly less literal translation offers a better, more idiomatic result. In such cases I have not hesitated to alter the translation accordingly.

THE RISE OF ISLAMIC SETTLEMENTS IN ARABIA AND BEYOND

The period from 661 to 750 C.E., called the "Umayyad era," marked a time of transition and negotiation as new concepts such as monotheism were vying for attention with the established paganism, while the ongoing process of urbanizing presented contrasts to nomadic ways. Although the definitions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy would not be formalized until sometime during the Abbasid era, the Umayyad period stands as the first Islamic dynasty, and the Umayyads were the first empire builders in Islamic history. As such, one might assume such a crucial era to have spurred a great deal of scholarship, but this is not the case. The more stable, longer lived and better known Abbasid period has received the majority of the attention from Islamists, historians and philologists alike. Arabian pre-Islamic society was characterized by a combination of the nomadic tribes and the non-nomadic settlements that occupied the peninsula. "Nomadic (*badawah*) and sedentary (*hadarah*) lifestyles," Bamyeh informs us, "constituted the two recognizable forms of social organization before and after the coming of Islam," (17).[2] In the area that

[2] Bamyeh goes on to argue that the conventional assumption that nomadism predated sedentarization may not be accurate. He says, "A more dynamic picture [i.e. than one in which it is taken for granted that

gave birth both to Islam and to its prophet, however, the Ḥijāz, nomadism predominated. Paul Wheatley explains, "At the beginning of the seventh century relatively little urban development existed in the Ḥijāz" (32). For a variety of reasons these Ḥijāzī—and other—nomads would locate in permanent settlements that would eventually form cities. With this sedentarization occurred a gradual process of negotiation for tribal members, who in time came to identify themselves by other means than strictly tribal ties. The expansion of the Islamic empire amplified the pattern of sedentarization begun before the advent of Islam, as the new state began to establish its own settlements outside Arabia. These newly founded urban spaces witnessed an ongoing, and incomplete, reconfiguration of tribal relations in a changing world. This sedentarization, incomplete and ongoing as it was, provides a backdrop for the new discourse of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* poetry, which presents a process of negotiating tribal relations, as the poets brought pre-Islamic lampoon into the Umayyad era.

The notion that Islam brought civilization and culture to the uncivilized nomads of Arabia still holds in some quarters as a lingering effect of the Islam-equals-civilization equation. Along the same line of thinking is the antonymous assumption that the period prior to Islam was a time of un-civilization, all that Islam was not. This is denoted by the term "*Jāhiliyya*." Jaroslav Stetkevych explains how the word (erroneously) came to mean the semantic opposite of "*Islam*."

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badāwa predates *ḥaḍāra*], however, emerges when one examines geographic encyclopedias, such as Yaqut's or al-Bekri's, that outline the seasonal or temporal nature of many localities associated with a sedentary lifestyle. There are hints of an *effort* at sedentarization, an effort continuously frustrated by the scarcity of water and fertile land and the frequency of droughts" (17).

> There was thus this earlier underlying sense to the new Islamic abstraction and conceptualization of *al-jāhilīyah* for it, as term, to have become fully meaningful as periodization. After all, "Islam" (*islām*) did not mean knowledge / *gnosis* to have produced as its antonym non-knowledge / ignorance / *agnosis*. Islam was "submission," and submission was *not* there to abrogate "ignorance." If its opposite was indeed *jahl*, that *jahl* of "non-submission," once again, did not mean ignorance. There had to have taken place, therefore, a semantic circumvention. Inasmuch as *islām* had an almost synonymic relationship to another Arabic cultural key term, that of *ḥilm* ("forebearance," "indulgence," "discernment," "gravity," "sobriety"), which was an object of full, positive co-optation by the Islamic ethos, and inasmuch as this *ḥilm* was the true antonym of *jahl*, this legitimately syllogistic equation was capable of producing the graspable binary opposition and semantic antonymy between *islām* and *jahl*—submission and non-submission—and, ultimately, the terminological antiposition between Islam, the creed, and al-Jāhilīyah, the non-creed. (6)

The dichotomy that the term *Jāhiliyya* creates is not helpful to an understanding of the gradual shifts that were occurring in Arabia preceding and after the advent of Islam. Pre-Islamic Arabia was, in fact, as we have seen, to a considerable extent nomadic, but nomadism was accompanied by other models that made for a culturally diverse and rich region. Ibrahim notes this diversity and confirms our resistance to the concept of "*jāhilīya*," saying in his introduction, "Arabian society was varied and complex and,

aside from nomadic groups, there were pastoral and settled communities organized in states that were centered in the surplus-producing southern and northern regions" (7).[3]

Clearly, then, tribal sedentarization and the establishment of cities in Arabia were not totally a result of the advent of Islam, however much the Islamic state encouraged and accelerated their formation. In both the north and south of seventh-century Arabia, around the area of present day Yemen and Jawf respectively, cities had been established as early as the eighth century B.C.E.[4] The South Arabian tribe of Ḥimyar had emerged as the dominant power as early as the second century B.C.E. and maintained control for some seven centuries, "until 525," Wheatley says, "when the last *tubba'*, a Jew, was deposed by a second Abyssinian (Aksūmite) invasion" (4). Of all regions of Arabia, however, the one that would have the profoundest impact on sedentarizing the region and beyond (to say nothing of the place afforded it in world history on account of the prophet and faith it produced) is the area nestled between northern and southern Arabia near the Red Sea coast: al-Ḥijāz.

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3 Ibrahim expounds on this sentiment in the introductory paragraph to his first chapter. "The existence in Arabia of tribalism as a type of social formation and of the desert as a material condition cannot be denied, but in view of current research and recent archaeological discoveries, it is inaccurate to generalize this view to all of Arabia. Recent literature on pre-Islamic Arabia, especially its southern part, points to a more dynamic history than that based on the 'static and sterile' notion of *jahiliyya*. Arabians were socially and economically diversified and had many life-styles—nomadic, pastoral, and settled" (12).

4 Wheatley explains, "These agriculturally and commercially based cities of South Arabia had emerged through an internally generated process of societal transformation. In contrast, the cities in the northern part of the peninsula generally had arisen in response to Hellenistic and Roman influences from Syria permeating through societies whose dominant mode of life was that of nomadic, seminomadic, and sedentary tribalism" (5).

By virtue of the mountains that surround it and the scarcity of water in the area al-Ḥijāz was populated largely by nomadic Bedouins. It remained nomadic even after parts of it had become sedentarized. "The emergence of sedentary societies," Bamyeh declares, "did not necessarily entail the oblivion of the horizons of wandering" (11). This is especially true of Mecca, which Bamyeh calls "a locus of migratory trade" (ibid.). Al-Ḥijāz did contain other settlements including, principally, al-Ṭā'if and Yathrib (modern-day Medina), in addition to smaller oases, but nomadism marked a distinct—perhaps the distinctive—lifestyle of the region.[5] Wheatley says, "In this austere environment [i.e., al-Ḥijāz] the traditional basis of life has been pastoralism in one or another of its several forms" (8).

Sedentarization of Arabian tribes had begun before the advent of Islam, and was accelerated by the spread of the Islamic state as it enlarged the borders of its ever expanding empire, described by Wheatley as "broad swaths cut by the Muslim armies through Africa and Asia" (39). One mechanism that accelerated sedentarization was the encampments that served as quarters between campaigns for the Arab tribesmen who were at the forefront of the Islamic conquest. These military cantonments, *amṣār* (sing.

5 Wheatley cites a vignette about ʿAbd al-Muṭṭalib's meeting with Abrahah, in which the former demands only the return of the tribe's camels as restitution for an invasion they had carried out. Wheatley calls this "a characteristic badū response," and notes that this incident supposedly occurred in 547 A.D., showing the Bedouin culture present in al-Ḥijāz on the eve of Islam (17-18). Wheatley goes on to argue that this Bedouin outlook must have remained throughout and beyond Muhammad's time, despite Watt's claims to the contrary (cf. Watt, *Muhammad: Prophet and Statesman*, 48-49).

miṣr),[6] spread through Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and Tunisia. Some were built at already existing cities, but many were built from the ground up as new establishments.[7] Many of these settlements became permanent cities through a gradual process as the nomads-turned-soldiers who had originally been garrisoned there gave up nomadism and settled at the cantonment to remain on a permanent basis. Other similar settlements included *rubuṭ* (sing. *ribāṭ*), which were comparable to *amṣār*, but in addition to being "a fortified barracks where tribesmen in the holy war kept post for the defense of Islam [they also provided a place where they could] occup[y] themselves with religious devotions between campaigns" (Wheatley, 53). In addition to both *amṣār* and *rubuṭ* are what Wheatley designates "spontaneously generated cities" to signify settlements that sprang up without the intervention of an authoritative leadership, i.e. they were not instituted as *amṣār* or *rubuṭ* by the Islamic authority, but served a similar de facto purpose (cf. Wheatley, 56).[8]

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6 To this day Egyptians refer to the city of Cairo as "*Maṣr*," a linguistic variation of *miṣr*, reflecting its status as one of the founding *amṣār* of the early Islamic period.

7 Wheatley cites the Syrian settlements of al-Jābiyah, Ḥimṣ, ʿAmwās, Ṭabarīyah (Tiberias) and al-Ludd as having been settled at or near cities (40). Kufah, Basrah and al-Fusṭāṭ, upon which modern day Cairo was built, were original settlements.

8 Wheatley identifies a number of cities of both types. "Some…settlements were created wholly or essentially ex nihilo, as were al-Kūfah and al-Baṣrah in ʿIrāq, al-Fusṭāṭ in Miṣr, al-Qayrawān in the Ifrīqiyah, Fez (Fās) and Marrakesh (Marrākush) in the Maghrib, Almeria (al-Marīyah) and Cordoba (Qurṭubah) in Spain, and Shīrāz and Iṣfahān in the old Sāsānian territories. The majority, however, typified by Damascus (Dimashq), Jerusalem (al-Quds, Bayt al-Maqdis), Alexandria (al-Iskandarīyah), Palermo (Balarm), and Seville (Ishbīliyah), were adaptations of pre-existing urban forms (39).

EFFECTS OF SEDENTARIZATION

As the landscape began to change, with the sedentarization of nomadic tribes, a new negotiation of tribal relationships began to occur. In the cities social and demographic changes began to be reflected in the culture as traditional tribal ties were accompanied by and competed with other markers of affiliation, such as one's position and influence in the community. In a tribe, one is born, lives and dies surrounded by other members of the tribe. These persons form a great deal of one's social circle. It is in this sort of an environment that one cultivates the ties that become stronger than all others. There was very little likelihood that one would abandon the familial ties of the tribe to form strong ties with those not of one's own tribe. Bamyeh says, "The law of cohesiveness of the nomadic tribe, *'asabiyyah*, developed around the idea of *nasab*. It entailed unquestioning loyalty to descendants of the same blood line" (44). This loyalty was manifested in the relationships found in nomadic tribes. "In the less-differentiated nomadic setting," Bamyeh adds, "the loyalty of the individual to the tribe was underlined by an experience of normative belonging to a social unit where likelihoods of fortune and misfortune were more equitably distributed" (267).

Strained loyalty to members of one's tribe and the social stratification that cities brought tended to reconfigure tribal customs and ways. Nomads-turned-city-dwellers were now working less for the good of the tribal community and beginning to prize more highly their own personal interests. Hawting describes the deterioration of tribal affiliations that occurred in the settlements, saying, and "Changed social conditions

brought about a weakening of the tribal way of life" (105).[9] In this new atmosphere, ironically, tribal genealogy became more important than actual relations. Hawting explains,

> Tribes had been removed from their homelands, fragmented, and resettled sometimes in a number of areas remote from one another, and in contact with other tribes, which had gone through the same process. Tribes which before had been strong and important might now be poorly represented in a given area in the conquered lands and forced into alliance with other tribes with which they had previously had little contact. The result was both a reconstruction and intensification of the tribal system of pre-Islamic Arabia, and a reformulation of the genealogical links which were its mythological justification. (36)

This reconstruction of genealogical links and affiliations necessitated a new interpretation of tribal relations. The tribe that was a salient feature of one's identity began to be used as a means to promote an individual's importance. Tribal bonds were prized more for what they said about a persons' (fabricated?) heritage than for the significance they might have conveyed about his or her relations with others.

More significant perhaps even than the natural consequences that came about because of nomadic settling were the ideological notions of Islam that weakened blood ties between tribal members. The context in which this new ideology and religion came

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9 Hawting is speaking here specifically of Khurasan in the mid-eighth century.

about was what Hodgson calls "the interrelations in the Oikoumene" (1: 110), the Greek term for the inhabited world. "These peoples," Hodgson goes on to say, "among whom Islam was to develop, were increasingly linked together, even apart from wider contacts across the Oikoumene" (ibid.). Paradoxically among the increased contact, communication and commerce that came about in the Oikoumene there occurred a general weakening of ties between familial groups. This process was gradual and incomplete, and is difficult to pinpoint. Only by comparison of the pre-Islamic period to sometime later in the Abbasid era does one see the effects of this process. "All across the citied zone of the Afro-Eurasian Oikoumene," Hodgson says, "organized religious traditions which, in contrast to most of the previous religious traditions, made not tribal or civic but primarily personal demands" (1: 125). This new religious focus only furthered the realignment of tribal relations.

TRIBAL STRUCTURE AS THE BASIS FOR "ISLAMIC" CITIES

We have mentioned in this chapter two principle types of cities that came about around the time of the advent of Islam, some of them having begun before its arrival and others springing into existence after its coming. The first type includes those cities that came about as a result of the natural sedentarization of nomadic tribes. These institutions grew more or less organically out of the existing tribal structure. The second type are those that began as settlements of tribesmen, the commonest of which are the *amṣār*, instituted by the Islamic empire on the fringe of its ever-expanding border. These, too, often

became permanent cities over time, and sometimes in much the same fashion as the earlier, more spontaneous type, but often with a more patterned and systematic development owing to their original orderly layout as military settlements. Both were built naturally on a tribal structure, whether because a tribe decided to make a permanent settlement, or because tribesmen settled in *amṣār* between campaigns. This section will explore how tribal structures were adapted and in some cases adopted by the new Islamic rulers, and how these old tribal ties and relationships were exploited as a means of legitimizing the order of the new Islamic cities, both those that were instituted by the Islamic state (the *amṣār*) and those that sprang up in what became Islamic territory (mainly the settled tribes of the Ḥijāz).

The nomadic tribes upon whose structure these cities were built provided the general organization that took care of all business that needed to be conducted. There was little separation of roles to speak of (cf. Sahlins, 15), but within each tribe was the nucleus of governmental, political and religious institutions. These ad hoc functions became institutions and certain people began to specialize in certain areas while others specialized in others. But each of these organizations had its origins in tribal institutions.

In addition to using their own (Arab) tribal structures, the Islamic state also adopted the existing administrative structures of the peoples they conquered, including often officials and coinage (cf. Wheatley, 36). Not only did this keep the conquered locals comfortable, it was almost a necessity, as nomadic (becoming all the time less so) Arabs, who had little experience with complex civic structures, began to acquire long-

settled, cosmopolitan areas from the Sasanians and Byzantines. Not only does this show their practical side, and their lack of hesitation to use the necessary means to accomplish their aims, but it also serves as a reflection of what had been done at the forefront of the Islamic expansion when existing tribal structures had been used in the *amṣār* established for the tribal *mujāhidūn* armies, and mirrors to a lesser extent the situation found in Arabia at the advent of Islam, when nomadic tribes located in permanent settlements that made de facto use of tribal structures.

The Islamic religious community of the Umma also made use of tribal structure, as Muhammad used the legitimacy of the tribe to form the Umma in its likeness and image. The new Umma was based on a tribal organization, but instead of blood ties linking the members of the tribe, it was now one's conversion to Islam (at least theoretically) that marked him or her as a member of the community. In actuality blood ties still played a significant role even within the Umma, which may be seen as a work in progress during the Umayyad era, with aspects of extra tribal relationships slowly gaining ground. Membership in this community came with a sense of belonging in the tribally based Umma, which Hodgson says meant "that a Muslim had an individual dignity as such that no other Muslim could be justified in abridging: all Muslims were to be as one tribe" (ibid.), the new community of the Umma.

The close blood ties that the tribe fostered represented a threat to Islam, but its structure and function provided for Muhammad a path towards legitimization of the Umma. The "open propagation of faith," Bamyeh says (179), that Muhammad embarked

on “after three years of reclusive confinement…called for an approach outlined in terms of traditional mechanisms of exerting influence in society” (ibid.), which he explains are the “close *nasab* (line of descent) relatives” (ibid.). By adopting tribal structures Muhammad produced an Umma with the same form as the family-centered tribe. He had to play politician to achieve success, which he began to do in Medina, where, according to Wheatley, he “parlayed an attenuated, Quraysh-derived, sacral authority into a base of confederate power, from which he was able to promote his role as prophet” (29). This was necessary because the nomadic way of life challenged Islam’s new order. The title Wheatley uses for his book, *The Places Where Men Pray Together*, comes from his translation of an alleged quotation from the prophet that illustrates the challenge the nomadic lifestyle presented. “What I dread for my people is milk, where the devil slips ‘twixt foam and teat. Their yearning for it will induce them to return to the desert, forsaking the places where men pray together” (41, quoting *al-Musnad* of Ibn Ḥanbal).

The places where men pray together, i.e. cities, then, were essential to the spread of Islam and its success. In order for Muslims to perform all their duties, they needed a safe-guarded, organized community, a place where they could come together and perform their rites and duties. They found this in the city. Wheatley says,

> The duties and obligations laid upon the Muslim could be performed fully and correctly only within the ambiance of an organized community of Believers. And the social ideals inherent in the service of the One God could be realized only if that community of Believers were safeguarded against external threats and

> internal schisms, and generally ordered so as to afford conditions under which the prescriptions for the good life could be implemented—that is, if it were provided with a centralized government. This dual requirement of community and government meant that the Muslim's religious obligations could be discharged most fully only in a settlement of some size, ideally a town. (39)

The Umma fulfilled the requirements of community and government by gathering Bedouins out of the desert and into cities as it brought them into the fold of Islam. These cities that Muslims established, and which nomads flocked to, became converted in, and never left, became an anchor on the frontier of the ever-expanding boundaries of the Islamic empire.

The new Islamic state borrowed tribal terminology to describe its new power systems. The term "*ahl al-bayt*" ("people of the house"), was, according to Hodgson, originally an "old tribal term referring to the family from whom chiefs were chosen" (1: 260). This term was applied to descendants of Ali (and Fatimah), and became an important "Islamic" term. Wheatley tells us that another borrowing involved the raids, *ghazū*, of the *Ayyām al-ʿArab* (*Battle Days of the Arabs*), which was an institution, sometimes only involving two clans, but which could escalate to war involving whole tribes. He says, "Glorified in later Arabic literature, the values and terminology of the *ghazū* were carried over into the period of the Islamic conquests, and the ideal of *al-kāmil*, 'the exemplary man,' owed not a few traits to the warrior *shaykhs* of the Days"

(11). Thus the state came to adopt not only the authority of the tribes and its emblems, but even the language it expressed them with.

One sees the importance that not only tribal structure but intact tribes continued to play throughout the Umayyad period, where the tribal leaders, *ashrāf*, served as a liaison between the state and the tribesmen (cf. Hawting, 36). To such an extent were tribal structures and forms retained that in the Umayyad period, after the Islamic state had instituted its own army with its own structure, contemporary sources were still using the old tribal terms. Hawting says, "Such terms as *qa'id* for a commander or *qawm* and *qabila* for the men were originally tribal terms…yet…what we have are not tribes in arms…but factions in an army" (62). This retention of terminology highlights the important role tribal structures played in the new forms of the Islamic state, including the Umma.

CONCLUSION

Seventh-century Arabia was a land peopled with a variety of different lifestyles. Among these was nomadism, which was prevalent in the Ḥijāz. The sedentarization of these nomadic tribes, and others both in Arabia and out, had been occurring before the advent of Islam, and was only accelerated by that movement. In addition to what might be called "natural sedentarization" of nomadic tribes, i.e. that in which tribes for various reasons settled and remained in a permanent location, the expansion of the Islamic empire

created a kind of sedentarization in the form of the *amṣār* it established for nomadic warriors who were fighting to expand the empire. A number of these settlements, of both types, became the foundations for cities that would be of great importance during the Umayyad era.

This sedentarization resulted in a reconfiguration of traditional bonds and ties. The city structure itself was built with the aid of nomadic tribal structures that fit the Islamic empire's ideological mold. This ideology took shape in the formation of the Umma, a tribe-like community that incorporated the material motivators of Islamic expansion into an ideological superstructure. The weakened tribal relations that were a joint result of the sedentarization and Islamicization of Arabia and beyond provide the background for the poetic developments of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* that would come about in the Umayyad period.

Chapter 2

Hyperbolic Lampoon in the *Naqā'iḍ*: A Comparative Study

"Your mother wears combat boots."

(Bronner, 123)

"I left your mother bending over, Jarīr,—She's a well-worn path!"

(Al-Farazdaq to Jarīr, Poem 39, line 87)[10]

INTRODUCTION

Pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* poetry and that of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq differ in terms of their discourse and rhetoric. Pre-Islamic poets performed lampoon to determine tribal supremacy, and were awarded recognition in exchange for besting poets of the opposing clan or tribe. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, performing in the Umayyad period, also won recognition for their poetic performances at Basra's Mirbad, but the shape and texture of their poetry were changing in a newly urbanizing environment, and with a new audience whose background and expectations were also changing. Into this setting, Jarīr and al-

10 وتَرَكْتُ أُمَّكَ يا جَريرُ كَأَنَّها لِلنّاسِ بارِكَةً طَريقٌ مُعْمَلُ (Bevan 1: 205).

Farazdaq introduced a lampoon poetry whose discourse was becoming a more comedic version of the lampoon poetry of the pre-Islamic era. This was a gradual process in which the changing landscape of the Umayyad era reframed the context of pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* poetry, from a serious battle to a comical play on that same battle, presented in a light-hearted, comedic way.

Scholars have focused on differences in the function of *naqā'iḍ* poetry between the pre-Islamic and Umayyad periods, essentially claiming that Umayyad-era *naqā'iḍ* served no function at all, save for being a medium of entertainment, in contrast to pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ*, whose function was one of determining tribal supremacy. Badawi asserts this, saying of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq,

> [The] *naqā'iḍ* were motivated not so much by the poet's [sic] wish to uphold the honor of their tribes as by a desire to entertain their patrons and their audience at assemblies such as Mirbad by scoring a point against their rival poets, a desire which indeed at times far outweighed considerations of tribal allegiance. (9)

To Badawi's claim of an entertainment-motivated *naqā'iḍ* I add Jayyusi's contention that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* is non-satire because, she claims, it is no longer truth based as pre-Islamic satire had been. "Such satire," she says, "based on untruth, loses its real effect as satire, becoming a kind of comical lampoon" (411). While both claims bring up important points about the changes *naqā'iḍ* poetry was undergoing in the seventh and eighth centuries, each dismisses Umayyad-era lampoon as mere

entertainment. What the actual function of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* was, entertainment or tribal defense, or some combination of both, is, however, a less important—and really unanswerable—question than what the focus of their discourse was and how it was received by the audience. In this chapter I adduce examples from various types of lampoon poetry in order to show the changing discourse in *naqā'iḍ* poetry between the pre-Islamic and Umayyad periods, exemplified by Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's new performance-oriented lampoon, which presents *naqā'iḍ* poetry in the new context of a changing society.

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry carried fewer consequences for the tribe and clan than pre-Islamic lampoon had. It was a competition that was at once comical, while still retaining the serious framework of tribal rivalry. The audience understood the serious aspects of the performance, the tribal conflict that was characteristic of pre-Islamic lampoon, even as they delighted in the comical poetry Jarīr and al-Farazdaq presented them, with its abundant degradation of women, its profanity, its crudity, and many other elements Jarīr and al-Farazdaq introduced that increased the humor of the poetry, which was now more playful than belligerent. When, for instance, Jarīr repeatedly lampoons al-Farazdaq as a blacksmith and a slave (two of the most commonly recurring themes throughout the *naqā'iḍ*), the audience understands this as a trope or a formula, and not necessarily a challenge al-Farazdaq would be obliged to refute (I have not found a single instance in the *naqā'iḍ* in which al-Farazdaq directly refutes the accusation that he is a blacksmith). Jarīr does in fact bring up the subject again and again. This particular bit of

lampoon is satirizing material the audience delights in. This delight is echoed in a number of comparative literary forms analogous to the *naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, which I analyze in this chapter in order to explore characteristics each shares with the *naqā'iḍ*. Among these is a hyperbolic lampoon with comedic, misogynistic and gratuitously sexual elements, all characteristic of the *naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq.

Central to the performance of the *naqā'iḍ* and to each of the analogies I use in this chapter is an expectation of certain roles which accompany the performance. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry responds to this expectation with a dialogue that includes the familiar motifs of tribal loyalty—defending one's own and attacking that of one's opponent—found in pre-Islamic lampoon poetry. To these familiar motifs and stock roles Jarīr and al-Farazdaq added many new elements, which created a new discourse, a new style of *naqā'iḍ*, which the poets presented to an audience whose expectations were different than what those of a pre-Islamic audience would have been. We may not, perhaps, be able to speak about Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's actual audience, but from the dialogue of the *naqā'iḍ* we can suggest an "implied" audience whose expectations drive the stock roles Jarīr and al-Farazdaq perform. I use here an adaptation of Iser's concept of "implied reader," with the substitution here of "audience" for "reader," and "performance" for "novel." The audience is "implied" because from Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry we cannot confidently say what the actual audience was like or what their societal norms were. Iser says, "Norms are social regulations, and when they are transposed into the novel they are automatically deprived of their pragmatic nature. They are set in a new context which

changes their function, insofar as they no longer act as social regulations but as the subject of a discussion…" (xii). Working backwards from Iser we may say that the subject of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* "implies" an audience with certain social regulations and norms. Rather than attempting an analysis of how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's actual audience responded to *naqā'iḍ* performances, we can suggest from the discourse of the text the expected societal norms of the audience and posit that the discourse of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's lampoon poetry came across to the "implied" audience as comical.

In order to elucidate some of the elements in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's discourse that mark a change from pre-Islamic forms, I compare passages in the *naqā'iḍ* with examples from several types of invective poetry whose discourse are analogous to that of the former. Each of these examples exhibits a typically misogynistic tone, and each employs a discourse in which hyperbolic satire is used with comic effect to gain approval from an audience. Each case also sheds light on the new discourse Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were employing in their poetry by its use of a hyperbolic lampoon whose language is more consistent with a comedic genre than a serious contest, *a la* pre-Islamic lampoon. This changing discourse highlights a process of negotiation that was occurring as poets performed lampoon poetry in a newly urbanizing context.

"FACETIAE"

The English-language genre with which the *naqā'iḍ* is most closely associated, and in fact, which is the closest approximation of a translation of the term "*naqā'iḍ*" into English, is flytings. These are defined as "poetical invective; originally, a kind of contest practised by the Scottish poets of the 16th c., in which two persons assailed each other alternately with tirades of abusive verse" ("Flyting"). Another genre of poetic verbal abuse whose discourse shares characteristics with the *naqā'iḍ* is the classical Roman tradition of insult poetry called "*facetiae*." Roman soldiers returning from a foreign campaign would sing these verses to and about their triumphant commander as they marched into Rome. The *facetiae*, unlike the *naqā'iḍ*, are one sided, in that the triumphant general makes no lampooning response to his soldiers, and no defense of himself. Despite the difference, the principles of composing lewd, ludicrous, sexually-charged lampoon in a playful format is found abundantly in the *facetiae* as it is in the *naqā'iḍ*. The difference, in fact, may be only so in hindsight, as we cannot know the actual circumstances or whether the general did, indeed, make a response. We can only say that if this was the case, it has not been recorded. An example of *facetiae* comes from Suetonius's *Life of the Twelve Caesars: Julius*, in which the author reports Julius Caesar's soldiers as having said, upon his triumphal march into Rome from the Gallic wars, "Citizens, protect your wives: we're bringing the bald philanderer home. You fucked away your gold in Gaul; that's where you spent your earnings" (23).[11] The

[11] "*Urbani, servate uxores: moechum calvom adducimus. Aurum in Gallia effutuisti, hic sumpsisti mutuum.*" Translation is my own.

discourse of the *facetiae* exhibits strong parallels to the *naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. Both include a harsh invective. In the preceding example, Caesar is called an adulterer and accused of paying for prostitution. In Poem 92 of the *Naqā'iḍ* Jarīr lampoons al-Farazdaq for his personal grooming habits in consequence of his supposedly being a blacksmith.

31 Ḥadrā' decried the blacksmiths and their stench,

(As if) denial prevents the free man from being harmed.

32 When she saw iron rust on his skin,

Gray in color, and his fingers short.

33 Al-Farazdaq said, "Repair our bellows!"

She replied, "But how can the bellows be repaired?"

34 Fix your belongings! My grandfather was Khālid;

Yours was a blacksmith: Nizār did not bear you. (Bevan 2: 852-853)

حَدْراءُ أَنْكَرَتِ القُيونَ وريحَهُمْ

والحُرَّ يَمْنَعُ ضَيْمَهُ الإِنْكارُ

لَمّا رَأَتْ صَدَأَ الحَديدِ بِجِلْدِهِ

فاللَّوْنُ أَوْرَقُ والبَنانُ قِصارُ

قالَ الفَرَزْدَقُ رَقِّعى أَكْيارَنا

قالَتْ وكَيْفَ تُرَقَّعُ الأَكْيارُ

رَقِّعْ مَتاعَكَ إِنَّ جَدّى خالِدٌ

والقَيْنُ جَدُّكَ لَمْ يَلِدْكَ نِزارُ

Jarīr includes in these lines many of the types of personal insult that are also common in the *facetiae*. In line 31 Jarīr showcases al-Farazdaq's bad smell; his dirty fingers in line 32. In lines 33 and 34 Jarīr depicts al-Farazdaq commanding Ḥadrā' (his wife) to repair his bellows, a chore to which Jarīr suggests al-Farazdaq's clan's expertise is suited. In Poem 92 Jarīr again refers to al-Farazdaq's blacksmith stench.

60 Layla preferred the blacksmiths and their stench;

In the rust of blacksmiths there is little good. (Bevan 2: 858)

وتَخَيَّرَتْ لَيْلَى القُيونَ وريحَهُمْ

ما كانَ فى صَدَإِ القُيونِ خِيارُ

In each of the foregoing examples the poetry exhibits a harsh invective against the one satirized. The "implied" audience expects the poets to lampoon each other with tribal and personal attacks because that is the nature of *naqā'iḍ* poetry. The otherwise

irrelevant details of al-Farazdaq's obnoxious smell and soiled fingers lend a comic flavor to these lines. In the *facetiae*, the one being satirized is not actually an opponent, but rather a symbol of power against whom the poetry is directed. In the case of the *naqā'iḍ*, Jarīr uses the harsh invective of lampoon—playfully—to portray his opponent in an unfavorable light. The difference between this example from Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* and what is often found in pre-Islamic lampoon is one of degree only, not kind. Whereas the pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* was more issue centered (poets tended to stay on topic), with Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, we see it turning to a more playful lampoon that included comical descriptions of personal hygiene, and insults about bodily irregularities.

Another example from the *naqā'iḍ* illustrates its kinship with the *facetiae*, as presented in the selection from Suetonius above. In Poem 53 Jarīr says,

74 Isn't it true, Jandal, that Banū Numayr never speaks

As long as his dick is hidden in your father's ass? (Bevan 1: 446)

أَجَنْدَلُ ما تَقولُ بَنو نُمَيْرٍ

إذا ما الإيْرُ فى اسْتِ أَبيكَ غابا

Jarīr's charge of passive homosexuality against al-Farazdaq's father in this poem exemplifies the overtly sexual lampoon typical of the *naqā'iḍ*, and which is paralleled in *facetiae* verses. Both make of sexual mores, humorous lampoon. In Jarīr and al-

Farazdaq's case, this change in discourse accompanies, and perhaps anticipates, changing societal norms: what is forbidden in practice is acceptable in verse.

"THE DOZENS"

In addition to Roman *facetiae*, and perhaps the genre of lampoon that most closely parallels Umayyad-era *naqā'iḍ*, is the African-American poetic form known as "The Dozens." The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the Dozens as "(in African-American usage) a game or ritualized exchange of verbal insults, usu. about the family (esp. the mother) of one's opponent or opponents" ("Dozen"). The *Urban Dictionary* (online) gives a more detailed explanation of what the Dozens entails.

> Playing the dozens is an African-American custom in which two competitors—usually males—go head to head in a competition of comedic trash talk. They take turns "cracking on," or insulting, one another, their adversary's mother, or other family member [sic] until one of them has no comeback. (Deeceevoice)

There are a number of theories as to the origination of the Dozens, both term and practice. Leland believes that the term "Dozens" is "derived from the archaic English verb 'to dozen,' meaning to stun, stupefy or daze" (173), suggesting a corresponding function to the practice. Abrahams suggests that the Dozens may have "possibly [been] brought from Africa" (219), and Chimezie likewise posits an African origination. Mona

Lisa Saloy, on the other hand, finds an explanation for the origination of the term in the early slave trade of the United States. She explains,

> The dozens has its origins in the slave trade of New Orleans where deformed slaves—generally slaves punished with dismemberment for disobedience—were grouped in lots of a "cheap dozen" for sale to slave owners.…
>
> In an effort to toughen their hearts against the continual verbal assault inflicted on them as part of the "dozens," Blacks practiced insulting each other indirectly by attacking the most sacred "mother" of the other. The person who loses his "cool" and comes to blows loses the contest. The person who outwits and out-insults the other while keeping a "cool" head is the winner.

Though the origin and etymology of the "Dozens" remain obscure, its dialogue of hyperbolic satire, delivered in a comic setting, resembles Umayyad-era *naqā'iḍ*, despite obvious differences. One of the most notable of these is an emphasis on a group (the tribe) versus an emphasis on an individual (the poet). In the *naqā'iḍ* poets vaunt their own deeds as well as those of their tribe, and lampoon both their opponent and his tribe. In the Dozens, though, aside from a large emphasis on lampooning the opponent's mother, the poetry is focused on the poets themselves, and not groups or families. With their almost obsessive use of mother insults, however, the Dozens are very close to what the *naqā'iḍ* were becoming at the hands of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq in the Umayyad period. This is especially true in regards to the level of misogyny Jarīr and al-Farazdaq display in

the *naqā'iḍ*, as evidenced by the large number of their poems that lampoon the sexual habits of their opponent's womenfolk. This suggests a narrative of anxiety towards women Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were deploying throughout their poetry, an amplification of an anxiety about promiscuity that seems to have been present from the earliest times. Smith explains,

> In ancient Arabia, therefore,[12] fatherhood does not necessarily imply procreation, and the family of which the father is the head is held together, not by the principle of physical paternity, but by the rule that the husband is father of all the children born on his bed. (142)

Smith's quotation implies that promiscuity was as abundant (perhaps more so) in ancient Arabia as it had become in the Umayyad era. If so, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's discourse of anxiety about promiscuity may be simply an extensions of an earlier phenomenon. Bouhdiba explains the rejection of women that accompanies this anxiety about their promiscuity. He says,

> Hence, too, the flight before woman. Fear of women, anxiety when confronted with the procreative forces that they bear within them, the strange unease that is aroused by that mysterious attraction for an unknown being who is often no more than the unknown of being. In many societies all this frequently turns into a rejection of women. (116)

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[12] In the previous paragraph Smith had explained that the Arabic term "*āb*" (father) conveys a sense of "nurturer" rather than "progenitor" (142).

The discourse of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry demonstrates a hyperbolically misogynistic satire against women. Again, as with the blacksmith conceit, there seems to be no convention of directly refuting misogyny directed against one's female relatives. When Jarīr lampoons al-Farazdaq's sister for her debauchery, al-Farazdaq does not answer in her defense. This may be because the misogynistic tone of the *naqā'iḍ* was as much a convention of the newly emerging iteration of the old genre of *naqā'iḍ* poetry as any real anxiety over women. Bouhdiba is relevant, however, because the narrative expresses an anxiety towards and a misogyny against women, if only for an implied audience. In this, it finds a strong analogy with the Dozens, which also contain a large degree of misogyny. Speaking of subjects taken up by the Dozens, Dollard says that "sex themes are by far the most common" (281), and also,

> The themes about which joking is allowed seem to be those most condemned by our social order in other contexts. Allegations are made that the person addressed by the speaker has committed incest, or that the speaker has taken liberties with the mother or sister of the one addressed; accusations of passive homosexuality are made [etc.]. (279)

In the case of the Dozens, the lampoon is generally directed against the opponent's mother. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq do not hesitate to lampoon each other's mothers on occasion as well, although in their poetry sexual lampoon may be directed at any member of the opponent's tribe, most often its women. Abrahams gives examples of common

mother-themed lampoon in the Dozens. “I f----d your mother in a horse and wagon. She said, ‘’Scuse me, mister, my p---y’s draggin’” (216). And also,

I saw your mother last night,

She was an awful old soul.

I stuck my d--k in her hole.

She said, “Gimme some more.” (217)

As well as,

I hate to talk about your mother,

She’s a good old soul.

She’s got a ten-ton p---y

And a rubber a-----e.

She got hair on her p---y

That sweep the floor.

She got knobs on her titties

That open the door. (210)

Not all sexual lampoon in the Dozens is directed towards the opponent's mother. Bronner gives an example of a line directed against a performer's sister: "Your sister came to my house, I told her to pull up my face and have a seat" (124).

In each of the preceding passages the poet portrays his opponent's mother (or other female family member) in a sexually offensive manner, and in each case the only expected answer is a stock insult about the other's mother. There is no expectation of an actual defense of one's mother. There is also in these examples, and in general, an intimation by the poet of his superiority over the sexually debased mother, usually expressed by his domination of her. We find many of these same techniques in the *naqā'iḍ*. Most involve the poets portraying the sexually indecent behavior of the female relatives—sometimes mothers—of their opponents. To this lampoon the opponent returns a set of stock insults instead of a defense of the female members of his tribe. One example that repeats itself throughout the *naqā'iḍ* is Jarīr's conceit about Jiʿthin, al-Farazdaq's sister, for her alleged debauchery. In Poem 53 Jarīr says,

33 Don't you see that Jiʿthin, in the middle of Saʿd,

Got the nickname "Wide-Open" after she was pierced?

34 He shivered as he passed her knees

And shook his manliness at her, then fled. (Bevan 1: 440)

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ جِعْثِنَ وَسْطَ سَعْدٍ

تُسَمَّى بَعْدَ قِصَّتِها الرُّحابا

تَحَزْحَزَ حينَ جاوَزَ رُكْبَتَيْها

وهَزَّ القُزْبَرِيَّ لَها فغابا

These two lines represent the basic "story" Jarīr tells about Jiʿthin: she was ravished, not entirely unwillingly, by a member of another tribe. Her vulgar nickname (Wide-Open) is a detail Jarīr adds to suggest her complicity in the affair. He portrays her throughout the *naqā'iḍ* as a whore in much the same way Dozens competitors portray each other's mothers. The conceit about Jiʿthin allows Jarīr and al-Farazdaq to use the audience's knowledge and expectations of the *naqā'iḍ* genre to produce comedy by degrading women. We cannot say whether al-Farazdaq actually did take exception to Jarīr's use of Jiʿthin, partly because there are no instances I have found in which he directly refutes these attacks. As he seems to be using entirely stock phrases it is, in fact, possible that there never existed an actual Jiʿthin, but that she was invented by Jarīr as a literary device of the *naqā'iḍ*.

Al-Farazdaq's response to one such instance, in Poem 54, is a lampoon on the women of Kulayb, Jarīr's clan, who were captured by a clan hostile to themselves. In a vivid section of the poem in which al-Farazdaq mixes gore and sex, he describes Banū Jusham's rape of the Kulayb women.

55 The women captives of Banū Jusham ibn Bakr,

They divided when they returned.

56 He said to his camp followers, “Take the

Loose, spread-legged women and put them behind you!”

57 Women whom the Day of Irāb abandoned

When their husbands fled to the mountains.

58 Screaming, their menstrual blood poured out

All over their legs. You would think they are fertile.

59 They stuck out their slave-girl breasts for them

And used their hands to milk themselves.

60 They bloody the saddles and you can hear

Peeps coming from their behinds.

61 Bad and evil followers the women of the tribe,

They longed to go behind the riders.

62 And you watched as the camels were

Driven away with the naked and starving women.

63 If your spears had been sufficiently long,

They would have penetrated when they met these women.

(Bevan 1: 476-477)

عَوانِيَ فى بَنى جُشَمَ بِن بَكْرٍ

فقَسَّمَهُنَّ إِذْ بَلَغَ الإِيابا

وقالَ لِكُلِّ عُضْروطٍ تَبَوَّأْ

رَديفَةَ رَحْلِكَ الوَقْبَى الرُّحابا

نِساءٌ كُنَّ يَوْمَ إِرابَ خَلَّتْ

بُعولَتَهُنَّ تَبْتَدِرُ الشِّعابا

خَواقُ حِياضُهُنَّ يَسيلُ سَيْلًا

عَلَى الأَعْقابِ تَحْسِبُهُ خِضابا

مَدَدْنَ إِلَيْهِمُ بِثُدِيِّ آمٍ

وأَيْدٍ قَدْ وَرِثْنَ بِها حَلابا

يُناطِحْنَ الأَواخِرَ مُرْدَفاتٍ

وتَسْمَعُ مِنْ أَسافِلِها ضُغابا

لَبِئْسَ اللاحِقونَ عَداةَ تُدْعَى

نِساءُ الحَيِّ تَرْتَدِفُ الرِّكابا

وأَنْتُمْ تَنْظُرونَ إِلَى المَطايا

تُشَلُّ بِهِنَّ أَعْراءَ سِغابا

فلَوْ كانَتْ رِماحُكُمُ طِوالًا

لَغِرْتُمْ حينَ أَلْقَيْنَ الثِّيابا

In line 56 al-Farazdaq answers Jarīr's lampoon of Jiʿthin by calling the Kulayb women "*ruḥāb*" ("spread legged"), the same word Jarīr had used in line 33 of Poem 53. This is a subtle, rather than a direct, response to Jarīr's earlier lampoon of Jiʿthin, and seems to be a stock phrase. It does not resolve the issue (the topic of Jiʿthin is brought up many times after this), since it does not directly answer Jarīr's lampoon of Jiʿthin, but it does show that the poems are connected. Al-Farazdaq depicts the women of Jarīr's clan as little more than property: they are apportioned out, and packed up. The poet also delves in these lines into erotic imagery laced with violence. Bouhdiba explains that the depiction of violence towards women is an attempt to flee the unknown. He terms this "flight before woman" (116), and it results in subsequent rejection of her. Bouhdiba illustrates the concept with an example from the story of Scheherazade. In it, the uxoricidal King Shahryar firsts marries, then kills a new maiden every night. "All men," he declares, "are cuckolds, for all women are whores" (Bouhdiba, 132). His solution to the problem of

woman's infidelity is to destroy them. Al-Farazdaq, for his part, besides projecting a misogyny in his own poems against women, also fails to defend Jiʿthin from Jarīr's invective lampoon. This failure on his part supports the thesis that the Jiʿthin conceit is merely a stock device the poets use in their discourse on women. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's misogynistic *mujūn* poetry may not reject women per se, as Bouhdiba suggests, but the dialogue of the *naqā'iḍ* suggests a "stock" anxiety on the part of the "implied" audience, which the poetry (and no necessarily the poets) is responding to. In Poem 92 Jarīr again lampoons Jiʿthin.

47 They trimmed Jiʿthin's bush and entered her forcefully,

And to Khashā'ish she took her flight.

48 She met Ṣuḥār banī Sinān among them,

The biggest and hardest he ever was.

49 She was penetrated by his crooked, contracted dick,

And blood trickled out of her ass. (Bevan 2: 855-856)

قَطَعوا بِجِعْثِنَ ذا الحَماطِ تَقَحُّمًا

وإِلى خَشاخِشَ جَرْيُها أَطْوارُ

لَقِيَتْ صُحارَ بَنى سِنانٍ فيهِمِ

حَدِبًا كَأَعْصَلِ ما يَكون صُحارُ

طُعِنَتْ بِأَيْرِ مُقاعِسِيٍّ مُخْلِجٍ

فأُصيبَ عِرْقُ عِجانِها النَّعّارُ

The graphic imagery of penetration recalls the explicit lines of Dozens poetry in which the opponent's mother is violated, and showcases the sexually explicit discourse of the *naqā'iḍ*. Everywhere Jiʿthin goes she seems to meet (sexual) defeat. This theme allows Jarīr to lampoon al-Farazdaq's clan as well as al-Farazdaq himself, using the motif of dominance, which suggests by analogy Jarīr's dominance over his opponent.

Al-Farazdaq's response (Poem 93) is shorter and contains fewer sexually oriented passages, but does become explicit in several places including a passage beginning with line 83 in which al-Farazdaq mocks Jarīr's deceased wife.

83 The clitoris of every dirty old lady confronts her husband,

As if its tongue is a bird's beak.

84 A slave girl of both hands, whose forefathers are vile,

Black where her necklace hangs.

85 She would perfume herself with farts, and no

Perfume seller ever brought a sweet smell into a room of hers.

(Bevan 2: 878-879)

مِنْ كُلِّ حَنْكَلَةٍ يُواجِهُ بَعْلَها

بَظْرٌ كَأَنَّ لِسانَهُ مِنْقارُ

أَمَةُ اليَدَيْنِ لَئيمَةٌ آباؤُها

سَوْداءٌ حَيْثُ يُعَلَّقُ النِّقْصارُ

كانَتْ تَطَيَّبُ بالفُساءِ ولَمْ يَلِجْ

بَيْتًا لَها بِذَكِيَّةٍ عَطّارُ

The sexual, grotesque (perfumed with farts!) and mean-spiritedness (lampoon in place of eulogy) of al-Farazdaq's lampoon of Jarīr's deceased wife matches Jarīr's lampoon of al-Farazdaq's sister in outrageousness, but does not answer the lampoon. Instead of a defense of Jiʿthin, we have an equally vulgar (and comic!) lampoon. Both poems recall the sexually explicit lampooning of mothers commonly found in the Dozens. This extremely crass hyperbole was used—in both cases—as a stock device to entertain an "implied" audience.

Another implication of the Dozens is its creation of peer bonding. Bronner says that the Dozens (Bronner here uses the term "mother-cycle insults") "provides participants in ritualized verbal insult with a release mechanism for frustration as well as basic expressions of creativity, competition, and camaraderie" (127). Ayoub adds that

"Mother-Sounding is not used as a preliminary assault weapon against an enemy but rather as a symbol of a strong peer bond" (342). Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's misogynistic discourse also implies a strong male bonding that was a part of their homosocial society.

Observing the discourse of the Dozens and comparing it to that of the *naqā'iḍ*, we find similarities which suggest genre parallels. Many authors writing on the Dozens indicate that they can and sometimes do end in fights, but this happens only when one of the participants begins to take the insults at face value and loses his cool,[13] which causes a breakdown of the ritual; then sport becomes fight. According to Huizinga, "All play has its rules…as soon as the rules are transgressed the whole play-world collapses. The game is over" (11). Drawing on Huizinga, Lefever says that "where the contest exceeds the rules of the game or when the 'play-world' becomes the 'real-world,' the dozens eventuates in fisticuffs and physical fighting" (82). There is a strong correlation between the Dozens and the *naqā'iḍ* regarding the concept of play. Pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* poets fought for the sake of tribal honor and prestige. While the discourse of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* suggests that tribal honor and prestige was still at stake during the Umayyad period, the changing dialogue of their lampoon suggests that the stakes of the poetic game were not as high. There probably were scuffles and fights over tribal supremacy at Mirbad, but the lampoon battles of the Umayyad period were pettier than

[13] Ayoub says that "the unwritten rules discourage physical combat" (340), and Abrahams's remark that insults "can proceed until…one hits the other (fairly rare)" (210) suggests that non-violence is the rule.

those of the pre-Islamic era, and Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were using the familiar framework of tribal supremacy to entertain their audience..

In addition to refraining from physical confrontation there are certain boundaries which define how the Dozens are to be played. Abrahams notes that the language of the Dozens is "different from the everyday language of the contestants" (211). He continues, "Such linguistic (or paralinguistic) elements as changes in pitch, stress, and sometimes syntax, provide the signals of contest" (ibid.). The most prominent linguistic features, according to Abrahams, are "(1) the reliance upon formulaic patterns, (2) the use of rhyme within these patterns, and (3) the change of speech rhythms from natural ones to ones that conform to the demands of the formula" (ibid.). This insight into the mechanics of Dozens composition and performance raises many issues that help us to imagine what the *naqā'iḍ* might have sounded like. We assume, for instance, that when Jarīr and al-Farazdaq performed at Mirbad, they raised their voice above regular speech to signal the performance. *Kitāb al-Aghānī* suggests this in its description of Mirbad as a place people would go "to raise their voice as loud as they could" (Al-Iṣfahānī, 1992 3: 56).[14] Besides raising their voices they likely also signaled their performance with the type of linguistic elements Abrahams notes. As to the form of the *naqā'iḍ* we need not imagine because we know that they followed the rules of meter and rhyme dictated by Arabic poetic convention.

14 لتأتيان المربد...ثم لتناديان بأعلى أصواتكما.

The point of the Dozens is to lampoon one's opponent and his family members on a personal level. This is also the focus of pre-Islamic and Umayyad lampoon, but in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*, these attacks are often more hyperbolic and more comic than what we find in pre-Islamic lampoon, and in this way they resemble the style of the Dozens. Bronner provides the following examples from Dozens poetry: "I went to your house, but the garbage man already emptied it" (124). "I used to wear clothes like you, then my father got a job" (125). "Does your face hurt? It's killing me" (ibid.). "You're so ugly, you couldn't get laid in a whore house with a fistful of twenty dollar bills" (ibid.). "Yesterday I stuck up for you. A guy said you weren't fit to live with pigs. I said you were" (ibid.). "You're so ugly that when you were born, the doctor slapped your mother" (ibid.). These insults are not to be taken literally, but rather form the first part of a stock dialogue that expects a stock response. For example, when the common lampoon against the opponent's mother (the "Yo mama…" formula) is delivered, the one being lampooned does not take this as an imperative to refute the substance of the lampoon. He will not, for instance, say, "Actually my mother is not… etc." Rather, he will answer with a similarly comical lampoon against his opponent's mother. When in one of Bronner's examples above the poet implies that his opponent lives in a garbage can, the appropriate response would not be to deny this and defend his actual home, but to fulfill the expectations of the genre by returning insult for insult, lampoon for lampoon. Likewise in the *naqā'iḍ* Jarīr and al-Farazdaq deploy comical, hyperbolic lampoon that does not expect a defense, but rather cues a similar attack. One of the most common of

these is Jarīr's conceit (mentioned above) about al-Farazdaq's being a blacksmith, which Jayyusi notes was an occupation of the lower classes. She says, "The fact that al-Farazdaq's grandfather had had slaves who worked as blacksmiths was used by Jarīr as an excuse to call al-Farazdaq's noble family 'a family of blacksmiths', a low caste in Arabia" (411). In Poem 53 he lampoons al-Farazdaq, saying,

15 You will know one [i.e. al-Farazdaq] whose father would become a blacksmith,

And one [i.e. Jarīr] whose poems were known to attract. (Bevan 1: 434)

سَتَعْلَمُ مَنْ يُصَيِّرُ أَبوهُ قَيناً

ومَنْ عُرِفَتْ قَصائِدُهُ اجْتِلابا

Al-Farazdaq makes no denial of his being a blacksmith in the response, Poem 54. This is not, of course, to say that he was a blacksmith (he was very likely not, but that is neither possible to verify, nor necessary to ascertain), only that the genre conventions do not call for him to defend his record, only to lampoon his opponent. Later in the poem Jarīr says,

47 The blacksmith—the coward—met grief.

Do you see him weeping, dripping tears? (Bevan 1: 442)

ولاقَى القَيْنُ والنَّخَباتُ غَمّاً

تَرَى لِوُكوفِ عَبْرَتِهِ انْصِبابا

This line has additional significance besides the lampoon on the theme of al-Farazdaq's being a blacksmith. In the second hemistich when Jarīr depicts the weeping al-Farazdaq, it is easy to imagine him weeping over the loss of the lampoon contest, especially since Jarīr had boasted earlier about his poetic skill. In Poem 64 Jarīr takes aim at al-Farazdaq's lowly heritage by invoking his blacksmith origins once again. He says,

68 If you, lowly son of a smith, desire our glory,

Take aim at a breast and see if you can make it. (Bevan 2: 651)

فإِنْ كُنْتَ يا ابْنَ القَيْنِ رائِمَ عِزِّنا

فرُمْ حَضَنًا فانْظُرْ مَتَى أَنْتَ ناقِلُه

Jarīr here is daring al-Farazdaq, lowly son of a blacksmith, to a contest. One could read this literally as an invitation to physical violence, less likely between these two poets than in much of pre-Islamic lampoon, but one could also read it as an invitation to a poetic battle of lampoon. Jarīr once again deploys the conceit of al-Farazdaq's supposed blacksmithness in Poem 72 in an effort to discredit his lineage, in order to boost his own image as a poet.

16 It happened that when the Banū Qufayra brought me

A blacksmith addicted to the striking of anvils,

17 I left the blacksmith more submissive than a tractable eunuch,

Compliant in his nose-ring.

18 Is it from blacksmiths and cowardly women

You hope for high eloquence for Yarbūʿ? (Bevan 2: 776-777)

وحانَ بَنو قُفَيْرَةَ إِذْ أَتَوْنى

بِقَيْنٍ مُدْمِنٍ قَرْعَ العَلاتِ [15]

تَرَكْتُ القَيْنَ أَطْوَعَ مِنْ خَصِيٍّ

ذَلولٍ فى خِزامَتِهِ مُؤاتِ

أَبالقَيْنَنَ والنَّخَباتِ تَرْجو

لِيَرْبوعٍ شَقاشِقَ باذِخاتِ

The literary effect is that al-Farazdaq seems an inferior poet because he is descended from a low class. Jarīr continues the theme of his poetic superiority when he asks if one hopes for eloquence from cowardly blacksmiths. Al-Farazdaq comes off as a lowly, weak blacksmith, the implication being that blacksmiths are no poets. Jarīr's point is clear: he is superior to al-Farazdaq in terms of his clan, but more importantly in terms of the poetic ability that makes him a superior player in their lampoon contest.

[15] I read here "علاة," "anvil".

Jarīr's lampoon about al-Farazdaq and his family's being blacksmiths leads to a more outrageous lampoon based on the notion that al-Farazdaq was a slave. Once again Jarīr bases his attacks on al-Farazdaq's grandfather's supposed ownership of (blacksmith) slaves. In Poem 53 Jarīr says,

81 You are slaves of the Banū Sulaym;

Pieces of a multi-colored coat are your clothing.

82 When I drove the slave of Banū Numayr out,

I was obliged to help them, the beggars. (Bevan 1: 446)

فإنَّكُمُ قَطينُ بَنى سُلَيْمٍ

تُرَى بُرْقُ العَباءِ لَكُمْ ثِيابا

إذًا لَنَفَيْتُ عَبْدَ بَنى نُمَيْرٍ

وعَلَّى أَنْ أَزيدَهُمُ ارْتِيابا

Jarīr's hyperbolic satirization of al-Farazdaq here as a slave of the Banū Sulaym demonstrates the new discourse of their poetry. These verses reveal a concern with genealogical lines, and imply a theme of an audience that is not sure of its own roots because of shifting tribal boundaries.

In addition to charges of al-Farazdaq's being a blacksmith and a slave, both poets charge each other with grotesque and vulgar habits, bodily irregularities and deformities as well as other slurs. Al-Farazdaq says about Jarīr in Poem 63,

61 He farted and shook off his armor, but I would

Not fight someone if my armor had been shed. (Bevan 2: 624)

أَفاخَ وأَلْقَى الدِّرْعَ عَنْهُ ولَمْ أَكُنْ

لِأُلْقِيَ دِرْعى مِنْ كَمِيٍّ أُقاتِلُهْ

Here again we see the poets using their poetry to draw attention to their own (poetic) prowess, and we see liberal use of comedic imagery as well. It is as if al-Farazdaq is warning Jarīr that without armor, he will not be able to face him (in the game of lampoon).

In Poem 93 al-Farazdaq calls Jarīr what amounts to a cesspool.

25 You are (the cesspool at) the bottom of every vile stream:

For every flood stream there flows a bottom. (Bevan 2: 870)

أَنْتُمْ قَرارَةُ كُلِّ مَدْفَعِ سَوْءَةٍ

ولِكُلِّ دافِعَةٍ تَسيلُ قَرارُ

This line is indicative of the hyperbole typical of the lampoon found in both the *naqā'iḍ* and the Dozens, and highlights the playful, over-the-top satire of the *naqā'iḍ*.

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq likewise introduce themes of homosexual acts into their lampoon as a comical stock device. This is common also in the Dozens. Bronner lists examples of this type of satire: "Your brother's like a store, he takes meat in the back" (124). "You going to take shit from that faggot?" (126). "You didn't get no round mouth from sucking on door-knobs" (ibid.). In Poem 92 Jarīr says,

89 Al-Muhammal witnessed that the Mujāshiʿī army

Sucked dicks for nourishment and howled. (Bevan 2: 862)

شَهِدَ المُهَمَّلُ أَنَّ جَيْشَ مُجاشِعٍ

رَضَعوا الأُيورَ عَلَى الخَزيرِ فخاروا

In this line Jarīr depicts al-Farazdaq and his (Mujāshiʿ) clan members practicing fellatio, among the most debasing of homosexual acts. In Poem 64, though, Jarīr inserts himself into the equation, saying,

62 I put on my armor, but al-Farazdaq was a (mere) plaything:

He had on pretty scarves and twirled around with bells jingling.

63 Prepare with the ornaments perfume, because

Jarīr is your husband and you are his lawful wives! (Bevan 2: 650)

لَبِسْتُ أَداتِي والفَرَزْدَقُ لعْبَةٌ

عَلَيهِ وِشاحا كُرَّجٍ وجَلاجِلُهْ

أَعِدّوا مَعَ الحِلْيِ المَلابَ فإنَّما

جَريرٌ لَكُمْ بَعْلٌ وأَنْتُمْ حَلائِلُهْ

Beyond lampooning al-Farazdaq as a pathic, Jarīr, more significantly, is portrayed dominating al-Farazdaq, as the pedicator in homosexual intercourse. He also plays husband to al-Farazdaq's wife, a reference to Jarīr's literary superiority over al-Farazdaq. In addition to this, though, if we read "*luʿba*," "plaything," in line 62 as "*laʿba*," "game," indicating the game of *naqāʾiḍ*, there is a suggestion that the couplet refers to Jarīr's poetic dominance over al-Farazdaq. Abū ʿUbayda reports in the *sharḥ* (*apparatus criticus*) of Poem 63, line 61 (v. supra.), that, "Jarīr stood at Mirbad and he was wearing a complete suit of armor[16]…[and] al-Farazdaq wore silk brocade (*thiyāb washy*) and bracelets (*siwār*)" (Bevan 2: 624). In this commentary Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are portrayed as having faced one another at Mirbad wearing the same type of clothing Jarīr describes in these lines, perhaps a commentator's literal extrapolation from the text of the poem. Salient to our discussion is the portrayal of dominance Abū ʿUbayda's commentary highlights in the new, comic discourse. In this case Jarīr is alluding to his

16 وقد لَبِسَ دِرْعًا وسِلاحًا تامًّا.

dominance over al-Farazdaq as a performer of poetry by means of a comical description of one of their meetings.

A final example will highlight the changing discourse of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*. In Poem 49 al-Farazdaq says,

7 You will not reach my generosity with your father's greed

Nor my extraordinary events with your false boasts. (Bevan 1: 325)

لَنْ تُدْرِكوا كَرَمی بِلُؤمِ أَبيكُمُ

وأَوابِدی بِتَنَحُّلِ الأَشْعارِ

Al-Farazdaq's line here reveals not only that he is the best man of his tribe, but that he is also the best poet. The game of *naqā'iḍ* is portrayed in this line as a contest over the literary supremacy of the poets. Al-Farazdaq refers here to their contest as one of words (as opposed to deeds), and presents himself as the superior poet and performer through his choice of words. In the second half of the line he uses the term "*awābid*," "extraordinary events," "wild boasts," to refer to his own poetry, and "*tanaḥḥul al-ashʿār*" to refer to Jarīr's, which is to say "false boasts" or "plagiarized verses." Al-Farazdaq is speaking here about the poetry itself. Couched in this way his description of his contest with Jarīr implies a genre more focused on the performance of *naqā'iḍ* and its entertainment factor than on winning supremacy for his tribe.

CONCLUSION

We have compared the *naqāʾiḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq to a number of other genres that contain similarities in the discourse they employ. Each genre involves players who lampoon their opponent with hyperbolic satire aimed at each other and at each other's family members. These are often sexual in nature and often involve a female relative of the opponent. The Dozens presents an especially instructive model with its hyperbolic, humorous lampoon, stock roles, and sexual invective directed frequently against the opponent's mother. These comparisons highlight Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's changing discourse, which conflicted with the sensibilities of their era, creating a comical lampoon based on a pre-Islamic model in which the social contestation present in the latter took on a comedic aspect that allowed the genre to survive in the changing context of the Umayyad period.

Chapter 3

The Mirbad as Stage for Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's Naqā'iḍ Performance

"All the World's a stage." –Shakespeare[17]

INTRODUCTION

The great Basran market of Mirbad occupies an important place in the history of *naqā'iḍ* poetry because it was there that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq presented poetic performances that reflected changes that were occurring in their sedentarizing and Islamicizing society. Not that they created a new genre, but in performing the pre-Islamic poetic genre of *naqā'iḍ* they showcased the evolution it was undergoing as the social context changed over time. Mirbad, in its role as the venue at which Jarīr and al-Farazdaq performed their poetry, serves as a metaphor for the transitions Islamic civilization itself was experiencing at the time.

Mirbad is important because it became, in addition to a marketplace, a performance venue, where, according to Wheatley, it served as "a meeting place for literati and others" (244). It was a place where Jarīr and al-Farazdaq could perform in front of the members of various tribes, some now settled, who comingled with each other in the Mirbad market. The concept of Mirbad as a stage is central to the themes of this

[17] (97).

chapter and essential to an understanding of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance of the *naqā'iḍ*. Wasifi has also visualized the Mirbad in a similar way. He says, "Mirbad…transformed into what resembled a great stage" (Wasifi, 191).[18] Dayf calls it "a great stage, the stage of Mirbad, to which the population of Basra would gather to observe the game of *naqā'iḍ*" (186),[19] and Brustad describes it as "a kind of literary market [where] resident as well as visiting poets with enough status each occupied their own assembly or platform from which they participated in and partook of public declamations and challenges" (245). This function is attested to by an anecdotal example from *Kitāb al-Aghānī* which says, "You sit there while this bellower lampoons us at Mirbad while all the time people are gathering around him!" (Al-Iṣfahānī, 1992 10: 187).[20]

The significance of Mirbad for us, though, is not only that it became a stage; it was a venue that allowed Jarīr and al-Farazdaq to perform their modified version of pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ*. The participatory milieu found at Mirbad allowed Jarīr and al-Farazdaq to interact with their audience, and made Mirbad qua stage ripe for the distinctive style of verbal dueling they brought to it.

In this chapter I argue that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq used the stage of Mirbad to gain influence over their audience through the performance of *naqā'iḍ* poetry. Mirbad was

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18 إذ حوّلا المِربَد والكُنَاسة إلى ما يُشْبِه مَسرَحين كبيرين.

19 هذا المسرح الكبير مسرح المِرْبَد الذى يتجمَّع فيه سكان البصرة للفُرْجَة على لُعْبة النقائض.

20 أنت جالس وهذا العجّاج يهجونا بالمربد قد اجتمع عليه الناس.

central to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance because it provided them with a venue in which they could captivate an audience with a new, hyperbolically comic-bacchic (i.e., *mujūn*) lampoon. In the process they helped move the focus of the *naqā'iḍ* genre from one of a tribal competition to one of an entertaining hyperbole in an increasingly urbanizing world. I will investigate how the venue of Mirbad showcased Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance of lampoon, which was evolving alongside the developing Islamic society in the Umayyad era.

During pre-Islamic times lampoon contests featured competing poets, each from a different tribe, whose audience consisted of members of the respective tribes the poets were representing. Each member of this tribal audience would have had a significant stake in the outcome of these contests. This ready-made audience contrasts with that of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's in Umayyad-era Basra, whose audience was made up not only of residents of Basra, but of outsiders as well, including "travelers and tribes passing through or moving into the city" (Brustad, 245). Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, therefore, did not have a ready-made audience composed of sympathetic fellow tribal members, but sought to attract observers from the throngs of Mirbad Market to their performance. There, according to Charles Pellat, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq established, each a place of his own, where he could perform his poems and attract hearers. He says, "Each poet or orator who was well-known had a special reserved place around which a regular group of hearers formed an attentive circle" (Pellat, *Al-Mirbad*). *Kitāb al-Aghānī* reports an instance of this: "The people gathered around Dhū al-Rimma [a poet], who was reciting at Mirbad"

(Al-Iṣfahānī, 1992 18: 27).[21] The people too gathered around Jarīr and al-Farazdaq to witness the spectacle of their lampoon performance.

FROM PRE-ISLAMIC TO UMAYYAD LAMPOON

The genre of lampoon poetry was undergoing a process of negotiation as the poets reframed a contest between rival tribes that could lead to or even replace a battle during the pre-Islamic era to a performance in the case of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, who performed in front of an audience at Mirbad, and whose outcome lacked many of the dire consequences of pre-Islamic satire. Stressing the violent nature of early lampoon Van Gelder says, "the history of *hijā'* shows numerous instances where physical violence is sparked off…" (*Bad and the Ugly* 6). In the *Encyclopedia of Islam, 2nd edition,* Pellat testifies to the seriousness of pre-Islamic lampoon. He says,

> In all the circumstances of war and peace, reactions to *hid̲jāʾ* were generally violent; when occasion offered, the victims sometimes went so far as to cut out the tongue of the slanderer and to kill him; in other cases, the insults provoked armed conflicts, but when the man slandered was not compelled by his *ḥilm* [*q.v.*] to pardon, he generally limited himself to jousting (*tahād̲jī*), an echo of which is provided by the *Ayyām al-ʿArab* [*q.v.*]. In a later period, when manners had become milder, the rôle of insulter was not always without its dangers, to such an

[21] ذو الرمّة ينشد بالمربد والناس مجتمعون إليه.

extent that some poets whose function it was hesitated to make use of it (see Gaudefroy-Demombynes, *Ibn Qotaïba, Introduction*, 57-8). (*Hidjā'*)[22]

This very serious atmosphere that pervaded pre-Islamic lampoon contests contrasts with the atmosphere found at Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* performances at Mirbad, described by Wasifi, who says, "different poets appeared daily to play their game of lampoon" (191).[23] Umayyad-era lampoon, then, was more playful than pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ*, which involved actual, sometimes physical, attacks. Again Wasifi: "*Naqā'iḍ* poetry is closer to *Jāhilī* life than to that of any other…because it expresses an actual state of enmity that existed between two opponents" (6).[24] Umayyad *naqā'iḍ* on the other hand may have been performed by poets who did not have an actual quarrel, or to whom the quarrel was less important than the performance.

In Chapter One we surveyed the evolution of tribal relations from before the advent of Islam through the Umayyad era. Tribes began settling down as Islam spread and cities were established, giving greater influence to extra-familial ties as loyalties began to shift and people began to associate beyond their own tribe. This gradual shift exposed people to two cultural systems of allegiance. One was the old system of tribal lineage based largely on blood ties and an ideal of the nomadic Bedouin way of life, a proud heritage the now city dwellers—Hodgson calls them "settled Bedouins" (1: 146)—

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22 Gibb adds that tribal contests were fought as much by poetry as on the battlefields (*Arabic Literature* 29).

23 يظهر عليهما يوميًا شعراء مختلفون يلعبون لعْبَة الهجاء.

24 وشعر النقائض أقرب إلى الحياة الجاهلية من أي عصر آخر...لأنه يعبر عن حالة عداء حقيقي بين خصمين.

clung to. The other was the reality of the socio-economic forces of trade that offered increased interaction with non-tribal members in the markets, the budding urbanism that accompanied nomadic sedentarization, and the new associations that accompanied the Islamic movement, chief among which was a sense of belonging brought by the Umma, a community based, at least in theory, on ideals rather than blood ties.

Mirbad acted as a stage on which Jarīr and al-Farazdaq could act out this dialectic, on the one hand presenting the revered form of tribal lampoon poetry, which appeared to be a seamless continuation of the pre-Islamic genre, and on the other hand presenting a modified form of *naqā'iḍ* poetry suited to their audience, for whom "the themes of pre-Islamic poetry," as Gibb notes, "were becoming increasingly irrelevant…" (*Arabic Literature* 43).

A further factor influencing Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance at Mirbad is that the poets often performed at a permanent venue located in the city of Basra, which as a city, would have tended to attract patrons who support the arts. Hodgson explains that "city dwellers…enjoyed a substantial share of whatever was produced in the countryside…[and that]…those who controlled the revenues patronized all that was refined in cultural life…and the quality of this culture tended to depend directly on the material prosperity of its well-to-do patrons" (1: 105). Hodgson's context is pre-Modern society, the first settlements in the Fertile Crescent and on the Nile. The principle is

applicable, though, to the Umayyad era as well because it too was a time under way, whose direction pointed to an as-yet-unfinished urbanization.

Badawi explains the process of change from pre-Islamic to Umayyad-era poetry in terms of primary and secondary *qaṣīda*s, the classical Arabic literary form Jarīr and al-Farazdaq used to compose their lampoon. Badawi calls "the Pre-Islamic *qaṣīda*…a natural product of a heroic way of life" (2), and says that "by its ritualistic function [it enabled] the Arab of those far-off days to face issues of life and death in an environment that was usually harsh" (ibid.). He goes on to say that "the poet had an important social function to fulfill, namely to sing the praises of his tribe, defend its honour and attack its enemies" (ibid.), the latter of which applies particularly to the *naqā'iḍ* genre. This he names the primary *qaṣīda*. He continues, "with the radical change in the poet's social status and hence his function, as a result of the arrival of the new religion of Islam with its fundamentally different set of spiritual values, the poet's image and role underwent considerable change" (3). He calls this later form the secondary *qaṣīda*, and argues that "despite [its] superficial resemblances… [it is] a different type of thing from the Primary: alike in its nature and its function and indeed in its *raison d'etre* (ibid.).[25] Thus did Umayyad *naqā'iḍ* adopt a new discourse in which the fates of tribes played little part. The discourse of tribal rivalry, however, was still vigorous in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's

25 Dayf too notes the process of change Islamic lampoon poetry was undergoing, saying, "Rather, it began to take on wider meaning, or say, 'more complex meaning,' that contained the old *jāhiliyy* and the new Islamic," بل أصبحت تتناول معانى واسعة, أو قل معانى معقدة, فيها جاهلى قديم, وفيها إسلامى حديث (212).

naqā'iḍ, and the stock phrases that this type of lampoon expected were an important of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's dialectic.

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* retained its old forms, but the meaning both for the poets and for the audience was new; new for the poets because their own fame as well as that of their tribes, to say nothing of their fate, rested not on a single competition in which they dueled with another poet to decide the fate of the tribe, but on the ongoing recitation of lampoon in front of an audience whose attention they wanted to attract. Many of them now also had more free time to spend in the markets, of which Mirbad was chief, and which they frequented both to conduct business and to listen to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq perform a new type of lampoon poetry.

STYLE AND CONTENT OF THE *NAQĀ'IḌ*

In pre-Islamic times the event of performance of lampoon poetry had centered on a contest between two individuals usually representing their respective clans or tribes. The primary purpose of this contest was to decide a conflict between the clans or tribes involved, and the gathering that accompanied its performance included members of the respective clans or tribes represented by the poets. This audience was interested primarily in the outcome of the event, since victory would bring honor to its tribe and defeat, disgrace. The function of lampoon poetry at Mirbad in the Umayyad period, however, rarely decided tribal disputes in so dramatic a fashion. Pellat asserts, "It is a

fact that the Mirbad was rarely the theatre for fights between different tribes or factions of Baṣra, and the confrontations which are mentioned do not seem to have been bloody" (*Al-Mirbad*). Leaving aside what may have actually happened, the discourse of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*, at least, suggests that their poetry was not an integral part of the tribal wars of pre-Islamic times (*Ayyām al-ʿArab*). The new context of Islamic civilization and the ongoing process of urbanization provided a new, comedic context through which Jarīr and al-Farazdaq performed their lampoon.

The relationship between Jarīr and al-Farazdaq and their audience was one of both mutual dependence and benefit. To an audience whose primary concern—on account of their tribal honor being at stake—was the outcome of the performance the artistry of the poems and the skillfulness of the performers would have been less of a concern to them than that their poet win the contest. For Jarīr and al-Farazdaq and their audience the aspect of honoring and shaming of clans and tribes did not bring the consequences to the tribe that pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* had. This resulted in a similar form with a changed function. Dayf likens Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* performance to literary debates (Dayf, 203).[26] The sparring found in such debates is very like the poets' ongoing attempt to best each other in order to attract their audience and gain influence over them rather than because of any constraint to prove a point.

26 كانت نقائض جرير والفرزدق تأخذ شكل مناظرات أدبية كبيرة.

The new function Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* served was accompanied by a change in style represented by an increase in hyperbole (often sexual) absent in pre-Islamic lampoon poetry. Wasifi informs us that "The vituperation that occurred between [Jarīr and al-Farazdaq] was unknown to the pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* poets" (Wasifi, 190).[27] As lampoon became less "serious" in its effect it appears to have become more personally insulting. Jayyusi says of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq that "they cross the frontiers of satire into pornographic fantasies that arrive at absurdity" (412). Far from engaging al-Farazdaq's clan in battle, however, Jarīr's hyperbolic vituperativeness was meant for the entertaining effect it had upon his audience, which according to Jayyusi, "must have been well received by Umayyad audiences" (Jayyusi, 412). [28]

Selections from the following pair of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* provide an example of the heightened level of invective and misogynistic hyperbole Jarīr and al-Farazdaq deploy in their poetry. In Poem 47 al-Farazdaq begins by extolling the virtues of his own clan, Mujāshiʿ, in comparison with Jarīr's clan of Kulayb. In line 20 he launches a lampoon against the women of Jarīr's clan. In lines 24 through 26 al-Farazdaq disparages the sexual habits of the women of Kulayb, saying,

24 They howl in the blackness of night

Like their dogs, who hump behind the house.

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27 السِّباب الذي تم بين الفحول الثلاثة لم يعرفه المتناقضون في الجاهلية.

28 This crossing of frontiers seems to have been a natural step to take. Van Gelder says, "The Themes of *mugūn* ("ribaldry, bawdiness, obscenity") overlap with those of invective as well as erotic verse" (*Dubious Genres* 271-2). Most of these themes are present in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*.

25 They extend their legs away from their slits,

Vaginas that are long and wide.

26 Their big-lipped pussies come in contact with penises, as if they were

Camel legs or donkey cocks. (Bevan 1: 279)

يَعْوِينَ مُخْتَلَطَ الظَّلامِ كَما عَوَتْ

خَلْفَ البُيوتِ كِلابُها لِعِظالِ

يَرْفَعْنَ أَرْجُلَهُنَّ عَنْ مَفْروكَةٍ

مُقِّ الرُّفوغِ رَحيبَةِ الأَجْوالِ

تَلْقَى الأُيورَ بُظورُهُنَّ كَأَنَّها

عَصَبُ الفَراسِنِ أَوْ أُيورُ بِغالِ

The most striking thing about this selection is its misogynistic hyperbole. Al-Farazdaq wastes no time in describing in excruciating detail just how depraved the Kulayb women are. In line 24 he compares the women of Jarīr's clan to humping dogs. This surely would have caught the attention of their audience because the word "*kilāb*" ("dogs") sounds much like "Kulayb," the name of Jarīr's clan. This, then, is an explicit lampoon (their debauchery) with a veiled attack (Jarīr's clan is no better than the dogs its name recalls) combined in one.

After a traditional *nasīb* section (absent in al-Farazdaq's poem) Jarīr begins his rejoinder, Poem 48, similarly with praise for his own clan (Kulayb) and mockery of al-Farazdaq's. Jarīr composes a number of scathing passages against the Mujāshiʿ women, in addition to lampooning al-Farazdaq for being a mere blacksmith (in lines 14 and 17 Jarīr refers to al-Farazdaq's bellows (*kīr*), and in line 26 and 59 to smiths (*quyūn*), which, according to Jayyusi, was "a low caste in Arabia" (411)). In lines 53 and 54 he says,

53 She[29] rose early in the morning, hurrying along a humpback, who was splitting her clitoris.

The humpback galled the hairy slow one.

54 May the god curse the sons of farts and their women

Whose stew sits out all night and causes dyspepsia! (Bevan 1: 321)

بَكَرَتْ مُعَجِّلَةً يُشَرْشِرُ بَظْرَها

قَتَبٌ أَلَحَّ عَلَى أَزَبَّ ثَفالِ

قَبَحَ الإِلهُ بَنى خَضافِ ونِسْوَةً

باتَ الخَزيرُ لَهُنَّ كالأَحْقالِ

[29] I.e., Qufaira, great-grandmother of al-Farazdaq, who had been mentioned in the previous line.

Jarīr's response is nearly as misogynistic as al-Farazdaq's original. Here he singles out one particular woman, Qufayra, al-Farazdaq's great-grandmother, as an object of ridicule. Using grooming habits as a basis for his lewd invective, Jarīr lampoons his opponent with an attack aimed at the latter's great-grandmother. Out of place in pre-Islamic poetry, Jarīr's lampoon fits the misogynistic tone of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*. The overtly sexual references would have also grabbed the audience's attention for their comedic value.

In line 56 Jarīr piles another obscene lampoon on the women of al-Farazdaq's clan. He says,

56 Sukayna rose up for the stallions, and Ḥutāt's daughter

Chose not to rise for Sūrat al-Anfāl. (Bevan 1: 322)

قامَتْ سُكَيْنَةُ لِلْفُحولِ ولَمْ تَقُمْ

بِنْتُ الحُتاتِ لِسُورَةِ الأَنْفالِ

This line borrows the idea of rising up to something, a motion usually made out of respect (for a monarch or the like), to convey the sexual meaning of rising literally to the horse, whose height necessitated her doing so in order to have intercourse in the bestial style. This and the preceding lampoons cited in this section are indicative of the hyperbolic misogyny the *naqā'iḍ* employed during the Umayyad era . This kind of hyperbolic misogyny is indicative of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's narrative of anxiety about

women. Mirbad played the role of a stage, providing a forum for the poets to use the hyperbolically obscene comic-bacchic lampoon found in the *naqā'iḍ*.

"EMERGENCE" OF SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's new, bawdier, and hyperbolically misogynistic lampoon that the atmosphere of Mirbad's stage encouraged and supported was able to grab an audience's attention in a way pre-Islamic lampoon would have been unlikely to do in the Umayyad era. By captivating their audience Jarīr and al-Farazdaq obtained a measure of control over them. They were successful in this to the degree that they were able to gauge their audience's interest and respond appropriately. For this to obtain there must be a certain willingness on the part of the audience to submit themselves to the poets' performance, or else the poets have no opportunity to gain the influence they seek. The key to their success hinges on whether the poets present what the audience wants and expects or fail to do this. Using Albert Lord's study of Serbo-Croatian oral poetry as an example of emergent performances, Bauman explains that "the singer [or poet] competes for the attention of his audience with other factors that may engage them," and that the performer's skill "is a factor in how strongly he can attract and hold the attention of the audience, how sensitively he can adapt to their mood, and how elaborate he can make his

song if conditions allow" (*Verbal Art* 39).[30] Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's new style of *naqā'iḍ* demonstrates their mastery at adapting their poetry appropriately to their audience.

Skilled poets have the ability to use their verbal art to alter the relations of power between themselves and their audience. The rhythm of performance encourages interaction between audience and poet and, according to Bauman, brings "a heightened intensity of communicative interaction which binds the audience to the performer" (*Verbal Art* 43). Bauman describes this as "a special enhancement of experience" (ibid.). In addition to this the formal pattern of a performance, Bauman notes, "fixes the attention of the audience more strongly on the performer, [and] binds the audience to the performer in a relationship of dependence that keeps them caught up in his display" (ibid. 16). To the extent that the audience becomes "caught up," they surrender a measure of control to the performer, which allows the performer to decide what information gets passed to the audience, and in what form it is presented. Bauman gives an example of this, quoting from Dick Gregory's autobiography. He says,

> I got picked on a lot around the neighborhood…. I guess that's when I first began to learn about humor, the power of a joke….
>
> At first … I'd just get mad and run home and cry when the kids started. And then, I don't know just when, I started to figure it out. They were going to

[30] Lord used as a case study bards of the former Yugoslavia, who would adjust their songs according to the mood and attentiveness of the audience. He says, "The instability of the audience requires a marked degree of concentration on the part of the singer in order that he may sing at all; it also tests to the utmost his dramatic ability and his narrative skill in keeping the audience as attentive as possible" (1960 16).

> laugh anyway, but if I made the jokes they'd laugh *with* me instead of at me. I'd get the kids off my back, on my side. So I'd come off that porch talking about myself….
>
> Before they could get going, I'd knock it out first, fast, knock out those jokes so they wouldn't have time to set and climb all over me…. And they started to come over and listen to me, they'd see me coming and crowd around me on the corner….
>
> Everything began to change then…. The kids began to expect to hear funny things from me, and after a while I could say anything I wanted. I got a reputation as a funny man. And then I started to turn the jokes on them. (ibid. 44)

The effect Gregory's performance had on his audience allowed him to control them as it mesmerized them, allowed him even to insult them, and finally subverted the social order. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq used a bawdiness and a hyperbolic comic-bacchicness that was new to *naqā'iḍ* poetry in order to capture their audience's attention, which gave the pair an amount of control over the audience.

In order to understand the new dynamic that emerged from Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance at Mirbad we must investigate the differences in the circumstances of performance that existed between pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* and that of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. Poets used pre-Islamic lampoon poetry for the pragmatic function of defending their own clan or tribal honor and attacking that of their opponents by shaming them. The entry on

naqā'iḍ in the *Encyclopedia of Islam* says that this genre of poetry "took the place of, or formed preliminaries for, a fracas or battle" (Van Gelder, *Naḳā'iḍ*). One example of a series of pre-Islamic lampoon poems between two enemies is that of Kulayb and Jassās, which ends in the death of the former. Wasifi informs us that the battle originated from a dispute over Jassās's allowing a camel to graze in Kulayb's pasture, which prompts Kulayb to threaten shooting it with an arrow. To this Jassās responds that if Kulayb puts an arrow through his camel's breast, he will put a spear through Kulayb's back. Kulayb opens with the following:

I by god am the shining moon,

And the veiled black stone.

Surely it grazed on restricted land.

And it frightened the birds on my land,

Far away in their hidden nests.

I will pierce its breast with my sharpened spear. (Wasifi, 23)

إنِّى وربِّ القمرِ المنِيرِ

والحجرِ الأسودِ ذى السّتورِ

لَئنْ رعَتْ في البلد المحجُورِ

وأفزعَتْ جَارى من الطيورِ

نائية في وكرها المخدُورِ

لأهتكنّ الضَّرِعَ بالمطرُورِ

Jassās answers,

I by god am a devil of a poet!

And I bring the dead back from their graves.

And I know the hidden and concealed.

You desired by your trick the camel’s spoils,

But I will leap swiftly,

Like a fox or a lion with a mane,

Boldly, not holding back any of my skill. (ibid.)

إنِّى وربِّ الشّاعِرِ الغُرورِ

وباعثِ الموتَى مِن القُبُورِ

وعالمِ المكنونِ في الضَّمِيرِ

إنْ رُمْتَ مِنْهَا مَعْقَرَ الجَزُورِ

لَأثبتَنَّ وَثْبَةَ المُغيرِ

الذّيبِ أو ذِي اللّبدةِ الهَصُورِ

بصَارِمٍ ذِي فَنَنٍ مَشْهُورِ

The contest continues for some time until eventually Jassās does in fact kill Kulayb with a spear, demonstrating the very serious implications this early *naqā'iḍ* poetry sometimes carried. By contrast Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's lampooning contests are not reported to have ended in physical violence, even though scuffles and brawls might have broken out.

Hyperbole and *mujūn* were Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's trademark throughout the *naqā'iḍ*. The dyad comprising Poems 51 and 52 contains a number of illustrative examples of this. In the opening poem, number 51, al-Farazdaq launches an attack on Jarīr and on the tribe of Qays, whom Jarīr often defended.[31] In lines 92 through 96 al-Farazdaq turns to *mujūn*, saying,

92 I swear, if Qays had given Jarīr its penis to suck,

And gave him counterfeit money,

93 How many times would she have divorced Qays ʿAylān from her cunt,

[31] It is not known why Jarīr defended this tribe, but according to Jayyusi it gave al-Farazdaq ammunition for his lampoon against his opponent. She says, "The enigma of [Jarīr's] support for the tribe of Qays, which was not his own, induced al-Farazdaq to accuse him of taking bribes from them" (411).

And the snake spears whistled by!

94 Ibn Ḥubāb's bride was cast out bodily

From them, lame as an old hyena.

95 The blessed Christian daughters stayed

On their knees, sucking the khalājim thighs.

96 And his Christian manliness buried itself in her Muslim virtue;

And she shouted at Ḥajj goers over the back of his huge cock.

(Bevan 1: 378)

لَعَمْرى لَئِنْ قَيْسٌ أَمَصَّتْ أُيورَها

جَريرًا وأَعْطَتْهُ زُيوفَ الدَّراهِمِ

لَكَمْ طَلَّقَتْ مِنْ قَيْسِ عَيْلانَ مِنْ حِرٍ

وقَدْ كانَ قَبْقابًا رِماحُ الأَراقِمِ

فمِنْهُنَّ عِرْسُ ابْنِ الحُبابِ الَّذى ارْتَمَتْ

بِأَوْصالِهِ عُرْجُ الضِّباعِ القَشاعِمِ

تَظَلَّ النَّصارَى مُبْرِكينَ بَناتِهِمْ

عَلَى رُكَبٍ مُقِّ الرُّفوغِ الخَلاجِمِ

إذا غابَ نَصْرانِيُّهُ فى حَنيفِها

أَهَلَّتْ بِحَجٍّ فَوْقَ ظَهْرِ العُجارِمِ

This selection is as shocking in its obscenity as it is telling in its message. Mirbad provided the backdrop against which a misogynistic passage such as this, which would have been out of place in a pre-Islamic context, could be appropriately presented to the audience. The selection is also filled with Christian/Muslim references, nowhere more tellingly than in line 96, where the old and established religion of Christianity penetrates, and demonstrates its superiority over, the upstart religion of Islam. Al-Farazdaq here is overtly humiliating the women of Qays, whom Jarīr defends, and attacking his opponent. At the same time he is creating a narrative about the new religion of Islam versus the established religion of Christianity. The last half of the same line presents the audience with the spectacle of the ravished woman shouting at hajj-goers over the gigantic penis of her defiler. The mix of the holy (hajj) with the unholy serves as a metaphor of the times, with its clashes of changing social and cultural norms, and Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's misogynistic discourse highlights the poetry's role in providing a discourse that would find currency during the Abbasid era. It is during this time period that misogynistic practices would be fully implemented, from the tension between an equality of the sexes advocated in the Quran, and the misogyny practiced by the first Islamic community. Ahmed explains,

> From the beginning there were those who emphasized the ethical and spiritual message as the fundamental message of Islam and argued that the regulations Muhammad put into effect, even his own practices, were merely the ephemeral aspects of the religion, relating only to that particular society at that historical moment.…However, throughout history it has not been those who have emphasized the ethical and spiritual dimensions of the religion who have held power. The political, religious, and legal authorities in the Abbasid period in particular, whose interpretative and legal legacy has defined Islam ever since, heard only the androcentric voice of Islam. (66-67)

This struggle over the legitimacy of misogyny did not begin in the Abbasid era, but Ahmed makes it clear that that period saw its full fruition. The abundance of misogyny in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's discourse highlights their poetic sense of anticipation. Nor is this unique to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. It is often the case that ideas and attitudes that later become conventional display themselves in literature long before they are accepted by society as a whole. One need look no further than attitudes towards homosexuality in the United States for an analogy. The "fringe" element in American culture carried on a discourse on the topic long before it became socially acceptable to do so. Note, for example, Gore Vidal's *The City and the Pillar*, 1948, which was far ahead of its time in its attitudes toward homosexuality. Recent years have only confirmed Vidal's foresightedness in addressing such a taboo topic in its time. Likewise were Jarīr and al-

Farazdaq addressing a topic that was not yet as widespread as it would become half a century later.

In his retort to al-Farazdaq in Poem 51, Jarīr counters with sexual references mixed with religious themes, beginning in line 11 of Poem 52 with a personal attack on al-Farazdaq. He says,

11 There was no Muslim neighbor who could

Keep a scabby camel safe on one of al-Farazdaq's sleepless nights.

(Bevan 1: 396)

وما كانَ جارٌ لِلْفَرَزْدَقِ مُسْلِمٌ

لِيَأْمَنَ قَرِدً لَيْلُهُ غَيْرُ نائِمِ

The bestiality attack is a harsh piece of obscene hyperbole. There are two important points we may infer from Jarīr's assertion that no Muslim neighbor was available to prevent al-Farazdaq from committing bestiality. First, the assumption that only a Muslim neighbor might be of any use in preventing this deed reveals a commentary that Muslims are supposed to be virtuous. Second, by asserting that no Muslim could be found, Jarīr hints that Islam is not yet ubiquitous, and casts doubt on its eventual destiny just as al-Farazdaq had done in the previous poem. This striking discourse about themes of an emergent Islam assumes an audience to whom Islamicization has meaning. To say,

"Muslim," even, implies a certain audience who can interpret the significance and meaning of the term. Jarīr's performance, therefore, implies an audience that would recognize these references. Jarīr continues in lines 21 and 22,

21 You hold them blameless for the price they should pay for doing Jiʿthin, after

She brought you a piece of her swollen clit.

22 You yell in the middle of the night, "People of Mujāshiʿ,"

After they had stripped the skin from her rear end with their giant manliness.

(Bevan 1: 398)

تُبَرِّئُهُمْ مِنْ عُقْرِ جِعْثِنَ بَعْدَ ما

أَتَتْكَ بِمَسْلوخِ البُظارَةِ وارِمِ

تُنادِى بِنِصْفِ اللَّيْلِ يالَ مُجاشِعٍ

وقَدْ قَشَروا جِلْدَ اسْتِها بالعُجارِمِ

In these lines Jarīr is answering al-Farazdaq's lampoon on the women of Qays in lines 95 and 96 of Poem 51, returning sexual tit for tat. More than that, by claiming that al-Farazdaq holds his sister's violators blameless, Jarīr questions his loyalty. In a tribal sense, and in the pre-Islamic era, the issue would have been mainly one of justice: the

tribe that committed the act would owe the injured tribe an equivalent measure of restitution. In Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry, however, it takes on a new connotation with the competing visions of Islamic dogmatism and tribal customs. Jarīr's performance plays on the sensibilities of his audience in the new urbanizing, Islamicizing era.

This new discourse in *naqā'iḍ* poetry presents a shift in emphasis between pre-Islamic lampoon poetry and the type of lampoon Jarīr and al-Farazdaq practiced. *Naqā'iḍ* was transitioning from a sometimes deadly poetic form to a medium in which Jarīr and al-Farazdaq communicated a new narrative to their audience. The shifting dynamics of urbanization that characterized the Umayyad era set the stage for the changed lampoon poetry of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. Jayyusi says, "In the Umayyad period [flytings] took on a new social significance which made them a much more important medium of comment" (410). Mirbad propelled Jarīr and al-Farazdaq to become two of the most significant commentators of this medium in their time.

There are a number of conditions both performer and audience must meet in order for a new social structure to emerge. The poet must be a consummate performer and the poetry itself should be of the highest quality. He must be entertaining. Jayyusi describes Jarīr, the humorist, thus: "Jarīr believed that satire must be funny, and his satires were faithful to his theory, despite their tendency to be foul-mouthed and scabrous" (411). Most of all, a performer must have a sense of his audience so that he can curtail certain portions of his performance, or add to them as the situation demands. As for the

audience, there must be a certain willingness on their part to allow the performer a degree of control over them. Bauman explains,

> Through his performance, the performer elicits the participative attention and energy of his audience, and to the extent that they value his performance, they will allow themselves to be caught up in it. When this happens, the performer gains a measure of prestige and control over the audience. (*Verbal Art* 43-44)

They must also have sufficient interest in—must value—the performance to give the poets their attention, and, if the poets are to continue exerting a measure of control over them, to return for more. If these conditions obtain, the audience may allow itself to be drawn in by the seductive power of the poet's performance.

This control that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq enjoyed over their audience came about through an attention to detail that supported them in their role as performers. Mirbad market was an ideal backdrop to stage their performance. The poets were careful to look the part of the performer when they arrived at Mirbad. According to Dayf they "dressed in their finest clothing and used their best perfume" (214)[32] in preparation for competing in their contest of lampoon. Jayyusi describes what this might have looked like:

> Large audiences gathered round the poets, each standing in his corner in al-Mirbad, often especially dressed up for the occasion. The audiences would often

32 الشاعر كان يَتَزَيَّى بأجمل ثيابه وأَعْطَرِها.

> break out into peals of laughter, especially when they listened to Jarīr's invective, which was full of mischievous barbs and comical imagery. (410)

This attention to the performance aspect of their poetry would have made a performance at Mirbad with Jarīr and al-Farazdaq appear to be more a night at the theater than a preliminary for battle. Kafrawi adds further insight into the mood of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performances, saying that they were "closer to sports contests than to anything else" (27),[33] and Wasifi terms Umayyad *naqā'iḍ* as contests between poets "who may be friends engaging in *naqā'iḍ* crafted for competition" (117).[34] As to the importance of performance in front of an audience to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, Al-Nuss claims that "neither of the two was about to recite one of his *naqīḍa*s at Mirbad unless the people were surrounding him" (*al-ʿAṣabiyya al-Qabiliyya* 478).[35] "They would come to Mirbad to see what the two poets were doing," Dayf adds, "And they would gather around one of them only to scatter away to listen to his opponent" (203).[36] Both Mirbad and Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's preparation, and of course their skill, gained them influence with their audience and a venue for their performance.

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance both reflects and prefigures the changing society with the changing role of lampoon poetry within it. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq used

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33 لعله أقرب إلى المباريات الرياضية منه إلى أي شئ آخر.

34 بل رُبّما يكون الشاعران المتناقضان في العصر الأموي صديقين, ولكنهما يتناقضان كنوع من المنافسة الفنية.

35 ولا يكاد احدهما يتهيّأ لانشاد نقيضة له في المربد حتى يتحلّق الناس حوله.

36 فكانت تذهب إلى المِرْبَد, لترى ما أحدث كلٌّ من الشاعرين...ويتجمَّعون حول أحد الشاعرين تارة, وينفضُّون عنه إلى خصمه يستمعون إليه تارة ثانية.

the poetry of defending tribal honor and attacking that of their opponent to the delight of an audience who propelled them to the top of the social order by indulging in their poetic craving as they came to Mirbad to hear the pair spar. The fact that they presented a form of once deadly serious poetry in a new way reflects the changing conditions that were occurring in their time. No pre-Islamic poet would have taken the abuse Jarīr and al-Farazdaq dished out without retaliation. At the same time they were at the cutting edge of a new style of hyperbolically comic-bacchic lampoon that presented a new discourse about tribal relations and Islamicization. That their poetry remains popular to this day is a testament to the relevance of their project.

Chapter 4

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's (Poetic) Relationship

INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three we explored the role Basra's Mirbad played in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance-oriented lampoon. In this chapter we will examine how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq responded to each other's poetry, studying closely both the techniques and devices they deployed in the individual poems, as well as the direction the series of poems took over the course of a forty-year routine that remained vibrant and entertaining to its audience.

Textual evidence suggests that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq may have shared a congenial relationship, if not an intimate friendship, or at least that is how their relationship was viewed by later historians. "Each must have admired the other for his art and resilience in the arena," Jayyusi says (410). To this she adds, "Several stories are recounted about their mutual affection, and when al-Farazdaq died, Jarīr wrote an elegy for him" (ibid.). Likewise, Al-Nuss points out that the pair was not the enemies their poems might imply: "And so we see that the enmity between the two poets was not an entrenched tribal animosity, moreover, many reports witness the existence of a mutual affection between the two" (*ʿAṣabiyya qabiliyya* 479).[37] What becomes evident upon an investigation of

[37] فكذلك نرى ان العداوة بين الشاعرين لم تكن عداوة قبلية مستحكمة, وثمة اخبار كثيرة تشهد بقيام التعاطف والمودة بين الشاعرين.

the poetry is that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were more concerned with pleasing their audience than with defeating their opponent. Dayf says,

> The basic objective of lampoon had developed into a desire to please the audience, whether the performers were enemies or not. This is what we mean when we say that lampoon became an occupation or a livelihood: the poet wanted to use it to surpass his opponent in front of the audience assembled at Mirbad or at al-Kunāsa. No longer was he concerned with pleasing his tribe—in fact he may no longer have even been thinking about them—except to consider them part of the audience gathered around him. (180)[38]

To this Badawi adds,

> Many of the satirical poems known as *naqā'iḍ*, the slanging matches in which the Umayyad trio, Jarīr, al-Farazdaq and al-Akhṭal were involved, were motivated not so much by the poet's [sic] wish to uphold the honor of their tribes as by a desire to entertain their patrons and their audience at assemblies such as Mirbad by scoring a point against their rival poets, a desire which indeed at times far outweighed considerations of tribal allegiance. (9)

38 فالغرض الأساسى من الهجاء تحول إلى الرغبة فى إعجاب الجماهير من الخصوم وغير الخصوم. وهذا معنى ما نقوله من أن الهجاء أصبح حرفة أو مهنة, فالشاعر يريد به أن يتفوق على خصمه عند الجماهير المحتشدة فى المِرْبَد أو فى الكناسة, ولم يعد كل همه أن يرضى قبيلته, بل لعل لم يعد يفكر فيها, إلى باعتبارها جزءا فى الجماهير المجتمعة من حوله.

Though Badawi says that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance was driven by a desire to entertain—it was more than that—still, he emphasizes the important point that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were performing a new, performance-oriented lampoon at Mirbad.

A unique feature of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* is the length of their legendary battle, which Jayyusi puts in the following terms: "The two greatest poets in Iraq thus began the longest dispute in Arabic poetry" (410). She continues, "Their *naqā'iḍ*, numbering at least a hundred, were composed over forty years, and ended only with al-Farazdaq's death" (ibid.). This very length, one of the distinguishing factors of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's lampoon verses, has led to the criticism that over the course of forty years the *naqā'iḍ* did not really develop. Jayyusi calls this "(perhaps) the gravest artistic fault of the *naqā'iḍ*" (411), adding, "Characterization was an important element of those satires, but once the original caricatures were established, they remained static" (ibid.). This alleged staticness, so far from being a fault, was a direct result of a performance-oriented lampoon.

I propose that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, rather than engaging in the serious poetic battles (or sometimes *actual* battles) that characterized pre-Islamic lampoon poetry, were colluding to maintain interest in their poetry by keeping their audience in suspense. This effort culminated in the performance-oriented lampoon Jarīr and al-Farazdaq carried out at Mirbad. I will test this claim through an examination of the *naqā'iḍ* in order to show the extent to which Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance was a "collusive" effort.

I deliberately draw on Goffmans' concept of "collusion" to explain Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's approach to lampoon performance. The conventions of lampoon poetry dictated that competing poets work against each other to win a contest, but Jarīr and al-Farazdaq worked together behind the scenes to craft their poetry. They were in what Goffman terms "secret communication" (*Presentation of Self* 177) that "placed [them] in a collusive relationship to one another vis-à-vis the remainder of the participants [i.e. the audience]" (ibid.). The effect was a performance that appeared spontaneous and unrehearsed to the audience. Goffman's term for this type of performance is "team collusion," which he defines as "any collusive communication which is carefully conveyed in such a way as to cause no threat to the illusion that is being fostered for the audience" (ibid.). By using this technique Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were able to maintain the illusion of spontaneity while presenting to their audience a carefully crafted performance-oriented lampoon.

STOCK DEVICES IN THE *NAQĀ'IḌ*

In this section we will explore stock devices of attack Jarīr and al-Farazdaq used in the *naqā'iḍ* in order to leave the performance unresolved (in much the same way Scheherazade does in *The Thousand and One Nights*), which heightened the suspense and kept their audience coming back for more.

Concerning the analyses that follow I consider only Poems 34 through 113 (the last), using somewhere near two-thirds of the corpus according to Bevan's edition. My rationale for this abridged selection is first, that al-Farazdaq does not even enter the corpus until Poem 31 and does not interact directly with Jarīr until Poem 34. The poems before this consist of contests between Jarīr and a number of other opponents including Ghassān, Baʿīth and the Salīṭ clan. Since we are considering in this chapter Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's "collusive" relationship, this is a logical place to begin. It is also worth noting that Hussein considers Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's early *naqā'iḍ* to be similar in function to tribally motivated pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ*. He says, "In the Umayyad era, *naqā'iḍ* poetry used to be composed during quarrels between different tribal groups. During this preliminary stage in the Umayyad period, the *naqā'iḍ* was still a continuation of the traditional *naqā'iḍ* poetry known in the pre-Islamic period" (Hussein, 502). For all these reasons I have excluded these early poems from the following analyses.

Themes and Composition of the *Naqā'iḍ*

A careful reading of the *naqā'iḍ* will demonstrate a difference in the way Jarīr and al-Farazdaq structure their individual poems. While one poet may follow a classical format, the other sometimes innovates. One poet may compose a very long poem, to which the other responds only briefly. The use of differing and sometimes unpredictable structures is another technique Jarīr and al-Farazdaq employ to maintain audience interest in their performance.

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* poetry is, with very few exceptions,[39] composed in the style of the classical Arabic *qaṣīda*, with some modifications. Traditionally the *qaṣīda* includes three sections: the opening *nasīb*, in which the abandoned campsite is evoked and the unattainable love recalled, the *raḥīl*, or journey, often on camel but not limited to that mode of transportation, and lastly the "meat" of the poem, consisting of either a praise (*madīḥ*), boast (*fakhr*), or as in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's case (most of the time), lampoon (*hijā'*) section. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq take a certain amount of liberty with this form, adjusting it to suit the needs of the performance, and each seems to have certain tendencies regarding how closely he follows the classical style. Or, if these tendencies were not the poets' own, this is how the poetry has been preserved to us. A good example of this can be found in an analysis of the tripartition of the poems. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq treat the first two sections of the *qaṣīda* (*nasīb* and *raḥīl*), with a degree of flexibility as to whether to include them or not. The *raḥīl* is often (although not always) left out by both poets. Jarīr uses the *nasīb* overall more than al-Farazdaq. He especially favors this opening section of the *qaṣīda* when he is responding to a poem by al-Farazdaq, rather than initiating a contest. Out of the thirty-seven sets of poems we are considering (seventy-four individual poems) Jarīr includes twenty-two *nasīb* sections,[40] or fifty-nine percent of the total, whereas al-Farazdaq includes only eight *nasīb*s,[41]

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39 Quite a few short, three to five-line, poems occur in the first quarter of the corpus. There are thereafter only a small number of short poems, including one one-liner (number 80). These are exceptions to the rule.
40 Poems 35, 40, 43, 46, 48, 50, 52, 53, 55, 57, 60, 62, 64, 65, 67, 70, 82, 95, 97, 101, 106, 108.
41 Poems 34, 41, 45, 61, 75, 93, 96, 105.

twenty-two percent of the total. Seventy-three percent of Jarīr's *nasīb*s (sixteen total)[42] occur in a responding poem where al-Farazdaq had performed the first poem of the dyad. Jarīr only includes six *nasīb*s,[43] twenty-seven percent of the total, in opening poems, i.e. those that al-Farazdaq responds to. Al-Farazdaq exhibits an opposite tendency with the few *nasīb*s that he composes. All but one, i.e. seven *nasīb*s[44] or eighty-eight percent of the total, occur in opening *nasīb*s whereas one only (Poem 93), thirteen percent,[45] occupies a responding position. The variation Jarīr and al-Farazdaq employ in including or excluding the *nasīb* section created a certain amount of suspense for the audience members, who would have been kept guessing whether or not this section would appear each time. Jarīr's extensive use of the *nasīb* section would have delighted the audience by adhering to typical pre-Islamic style, reminiscent of nomadic ways, especially since its themes typically include reference to the abandoned campsite. Conversely al-Farazdaq's near total lack of *nasīb*s is gripping because it allows him to begin right away, rather startlingly, lampooning his opponent. On the few occasions that al-Farazdaq does include a *nasīb* section, however, it would have captured the audience's attention because of the infrequency of its occurrence.

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42 Poems 35, 40, 46, 48, 50, 52, 60, 62, 64, 70, 82, 95, 97, 101, 106, 108.

43 Poems 43, 53, 55, 57, 65, 67.

44 Poems 34, 41, 45, 61, 75, 96, 105.

45 N.b. All percentages are rounded up, with the result that the total will sometimes exceed one-hundred percent.

Length of individual poems within dyads is disparate. In fifty-one percent (nineteen out of thirty-seven dyads)[46] of the pairs of poems I analyze one poem of the two is at least one-hundred fifty percent longer than the other. This disparity is occasionally caused by one poet's use of a *nasīb* or *raḥīl* section, or both, while the other leaves them out. Sometimes, however, the poem containing the *nasīb* is actually shorter than the other poem. Jarīr's *nasīb*-inclusive poems sometimes fall under this category. This disparity in length also adds variety and a level of suspense to the performance as the audience may wonder how long a poet will be able to maintain the crescendo of vituperation throughout the poem. Or, a poem might surprise them by cutting off suddenly and unexpectedly.

Two themes that appear with great frequency throughout the *naqā'iḍ* are the debauchery of Jiʿthin and the accusation that al-Farazdaq is a blacksmith. Both are cases of Jarīr lampooning al-Farazdaq. Sources seem to contradict the substance of both of these accusations, as Jayyusi explains,

> Very often they [Umayyad satirists] exploited a rumour, or a slight incident related about their antagonist and his tribe, and enlarged it to grotesque dimensions, giving it a lewd, or at least a degrading, interpretation. Thus the fact that al-Farazdaq's grandfather had had slaves who worked as blacksmiths was used by Jarīr as an excuse to call al-Farazdaq's noble family "a family of

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46 Poems 34/35, 39/40, 51/52, 53/54, 55/56, 57/58, 61/62, 79/80, 81/82, 83/84, 87/88, 94/95, 96/97, 98/99, 100/101, 102/103, 105/106, 107/108, 110/111.

> blacksmiths", a low caste in Arabia. Jiʿthin, al-Farazdaq's sister, known for good character, was the victim of another incident. Al-Farazdaq had accosted a girl from another tribe, which retaliated by sending one of its men, who surprised Jiʿthin and touched her shoulder insultingly. Jarīr spent his life describing, in one poem after another, Jiʿthin's sensual orgies. (411)

In the poems we are here considering, numbers 34 through 113, twenty poems,[47] fifty-four percent, of Jarīr's involve descriptions of Jiʿthin's sexual depravity. In twenty-seven out of thirty-seven poems,[48] seventy-three percent, Jarīr lampoons al-Farazdaq for being from a clan of blacksmiths. The repetition of themes involving Jiʿthin's debauchery and al-Farazdaq's blacksmith roots delayed resolution of argument, which kept the audience waiting for a conclusion, and thereby allowed the poets to extend their performance over a long period of time.

Poems 77 through 80

In order to understand the degree to which Jarīr and al-Farazdaq "colluded" in the *naqā'iḍ* by employing oft-used themes and avoiding linear development, it is instructive to cite one example of the very few instances within the corpus in which the poets address and respond to a specific topic in the style of pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ*. In their

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47 Poems 40, 43, 48, 50, 52, 53, 55, 62, 67, 72, 76, 82, 89, 92, 95, 101, 104, 106, 108, 111.

48 Poems 35, 40, 42, 43, 48, 50, 52, 53, 55, 60, 62, 64, 65, 67, 70, 72, 76, 77, 79, 82, 92, 97, 99, 101, 104, 106, 109.

thematic orientation the poems 77/78 and 79/80 very closely resemble what we have labeled as typical of pre-Islamic lampoon types. Though these four poems do not precisely mirror what is most commonly found in pre-Islamic poetry, in that they do not initiate a challenge that is answered directly, they do focus on a specific topic that both poets address once, and then never return to throughout the *naqā'iḍ*.

The poems revolve around Zīq, father of al-Farazdaq's wife, Ḥadrā', a Christian. Jarīr opens the duel in Poem 77 with a proxy attack on al-Farazdaq by lampooning Zīq and his family. In Poem 78 al-Farazdaq counters by comparing the brides of his clan to those of Jarīr's. In Poem 79 Jarīr again upbraids (the daughter of) Zīq for marrying a blacksmith, to which al-Farazdaq responds—in one line (Poem 80)—the following:

1 If your nose burdens you more than you can carry,

Ride your donkey to Zīq's clan, and give them a speech! (Bevan 2: 819)

إِنْ كانَ أَنْفُكَ قَدْ أَعْياكَ مَحْمِلُهُ

فارْكَبْ أَتانَكَ ثُمَّ اخْطُبْ إِلَى زِيقِ

The theme of Zīq is not seriously taken up by Jarīr and al-Farazdaq other than in these four poems. This is in contrast to other familiar topics such as Jiʿthin's debauchery, al-Farazdaq's blacksmith heritage and the frequent personal attacks the poets use against each other. The name "Zīq" occurs seventeen times within poems 77, 78, 79, and 80. Outside of this it is found twice in Poem 82, once in Poem 92, and nowhere else

throughout the entire corpus. Contrast this with the name "Jiʿthin," which occurs fifty-six times throughout the *naqāʾiḍ*. This rare example of competitive lampoon (the only other instance of this I find in our sample group, Poems 34 through 113, are Poems 83 and 84) reminiscent of the pre-Islamic style illustrates what happens when Jarīr and al-Farazdaq rebut each other's attacks directly. When this happens the performance focuses more on the competition than on the performance. The result is that the contest ends quickly (ends at all!) and brings resolution not usually found in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry.

Poems 71 and 72

These two poems are situated slightly past the midpoint of the one-hundred thirteen poem corpus, according to Bevan's edition. Bevan follows Abū ʿUbayda's chronological arrangement insofar as it was possible to do so practicably. However, his caveat must be taken into consideration.

> When the various manuscript copies of a work differ only in slight details, it is sometimes possible, by means of comparison, to reconstruct the original. But when the manuscripts differ as widely as they do in the present case any such attempt is out of the question. (1: xiv)

And also: "As the order of the Poems differs so widely in the three MSS, it is manifestly illegitimate to assume that any one MS gives us the order which was adopted by Abū

ʿUbaida himself" (ibid.: xvi). Bevan does, however, state that "the first 30 Poems in O [a manuscript from the Bodleian Library] seem to belong to the earlier half of the life of Jarīr" (ibid.: xvii). This statement supports my choice of omitting roughly the first third of the corpus from consideration in my statistics in this chapter. As for the sequence of the specific poems within the remaining two-thirds of the corpus, we will consider them approximately in chronological order without claiming precision, which is sufficient for the needs of this chapter.

In contrast to Poems 77 through 80, the dyad 71/72 is illustrative of the "collusion" Jarīr and al-Farazdaq practice throughout the corpus. Nearly all of the topics Jarīr and al-Farazdaq raise in Poems 71 and 72 have been introduced previously within the *naqāʾiḍ*. These two poems feature stock devices of attack such as the lampooning of Jiʿthin as well as al-Farazdaq's blacksmith heritage coupled with a lack of precisely addressing the opponent's criticisms, all of which promote audience suspense. In the following analysis we will explore the major topics Jarīr and al-Farazdaq take up in these poems. In addition to this we will view the overall structure and function of the poems: how one responds to the other, how (well) the poems relate to one another, and the ways in which the poems are left open-ended or unresolved to a certain extent in order to avoid resolution and to maintain audience suspense.

This dyad is typical of a great deal of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's production in a number of ways, although it is somewhat shorter than average.[49] Neither poem features a *nasīb* section, which, while this is by far the commonest way al-Farazdaq proceeds, Jarīr often does include one, especially if he is responding to a poem of al-Farazdaq's, as noted above. Despite these two issues, the dyad still falls well within the parameters of what might be considered stylistically typical for Jarīr and al-Farazdaq. In the opening poem, number 71, al-Farazdaq begins with an attack on Jarīr's clan, the Banū Kulayb. He says,

1 I swear by the Lord of Mecca and by the Mosque,

And by the decorated necks of the sacrifices,

2 That I have adorned the Banū Kulayb sacrifices

With necklaces hanging on their necks!

3 Necklaces not of gold, but

Forged in the foundries of Hell.

4 How do you see ʿAṭiyya when

Heads met big bones?

5 Proud stallions of Banū Sufyān,

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[49] The average length of poems in the sample we are analyzing, numbers 34 through 113, is forty-three lines. Poem 71 is thirty-five lines long, and Poem 72 consists of thirty-six lines.

Mounts long of throat.

6 Do you see their necks, proud necks,

Over the necks of your proud people? (Bevan 2: 768-769)

حَلَفْتُ بِرَبِّ مَكَّةَ والمُصَلَّى

وأَعْناقِ الهَدِيِّ مُقَلَّداتِ

لَقَدْ قَلَّدْتُ جِلْفَ بَنى كُلَيْبٍ

قَلائِدَ فى السَّوالِفِ باقِياتِ

قَلائِدَ لَيْسَ مِنْ ذَهَبٍ ولكِنْ

مَواسِمَ مِنْ جَهَنَّمَ مُنْضِجاتِ

فكَيْفَ تَرَى عَطِيَّةَ حينَ يَلْقَى

عِظامًا هامُهُنَّ قُراسِياتِ

قُرومًا مِنْ بَنى سُفْيانَ صِيدًا

طُوالاتِ الشَّقاشِقِ مُصْعَباتِ

تَرَى أَعْناقَهُنَّ وهُنَّ صِيدٌ

عَلَى أَعْناقِ قَوْمِكَ سامِياتِ

This opening is notable for its directness. Al-Farazdaq, in typical fashion, uses no *nasīb* section, or if he did, it is not preserved, but instead sets straight to work lampooning Jarīr and his clan. That al-Farazdaq begins with an (Islamic) oath only adds to the compelling nature of this opening: the audience wants to know why he is swearing. They find out it is a prelude to the lampooning of Jarīr's clan. They might have expected Jarīr to return a similar oath at the beginning of his response, but if they did, they were disappointed, since Jarīr responds with a lampoon of al-Farazdaq in Poem 72. The oath in the first line is significant if only because Jarīr accuses al-Farazdaq of Christian affinities at various points throughout the corpus. It is as if al-Farazdaq were here pre-empting any such attack on the perception he gives the audience of his religious devotion. Jarīr, however, does not bring this topic up in his response, but characteristically uses stock devices of his own against his opponent.

Lines 20 through 30 consist of a parody on the women of Jarīr's clan, the Banū Kulayb.

20 You worried about Banū Numayr lampooning you,

And you left your mother's ass open to the archers.

21 Observe me and your mother when I shoot

At her ass crack with piercing arrows!

22 The women of Banū Kulayb spend the evening

On their haunches, at the mouths of their wine skins. (Bevan 2: 772-773)

جَزِعْتَ إِلَى هِجاءِ بَنى نُمَيْرٍ

وخَلَّيْتَ اسْتَ أُمِّكَ لِلرُّماتِ

فأَبْصِرْنى وأُمَّكَ حينَ أَرْمِى

مَشَقَ عِجانِها بالنّاقِراتِ

وتُمْسِى نِسْوَةٌ لِبَنى كُلَيْبٍ

بِأَفْواهِ الأَزِقَّةِ مُقْعِياتِ

In these lines al-Farazdaq dramatizes his superior lampooning skills: Jarīr, he says, had worried about the Banū Numayr's lampoon, and now he has to deal with the formidable al-Farazdaq himself. By introducing the act of lampooning as a topic of his lampoon, al-Farazdaq is deliberately drawing attention to the performance-oriented aspect of the poetry. This example demonstrates Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's focus on performance. Al-Farazdaq reinforces this point with the vivid imagery of his taking aim at Jarīr's mother's wide open legs. This could be read as a metaphor for his poetic skill: he, as a poet, is taking aim at Jarīr, as a poet, using the women (the matriarch even!) of Jarīr's clan as proxy. In line 22 the *sharḥ* informs us that "*muqʿiyāt*" means "sitting on their buttocks as a dog squats,"[50] which is appropriate since Kulayb means "little dog." Three lines later

50 قال والمُقْعِى القاعِد على استه كما يُقْعِى الكَلْبُ (Bevan 2: 773).

al-Farazdaq becomes more sexually explicit in his lampoon of the women of Jarīr's clan. He says,

25 They sell their pussies for any price,

As if they were selling at the market: Come here, get some of mine!

26 You imagine their clitorises, when they are forced to kneel, are

Hanging over their calves. (Bevan 2: 773)

يَبِعْنَ فُروجَهُنَّ بِكُلِّ فَلْسٍ

كَبَيْعِ السُّوقِ خُذْ مِنّى وهاتِ

تَخالُ بُظورَهُنَّ إذا أُنيخَتْ

عَلَى رُكَباتِهِنَّ مُخَوِّياتِ

Al-Farazdaq's lampoon of the women of Jarīr's clan reaches a sexual climax (so to speak) in these lines, and is an attack by proxy on Jarīr. It is also one of many devices al-Farazdaq uses to maintain the audience's interest. By accusing the Kulayb women of promiscuity, a proxy attack on all women, al-Farazdaq is creating a discourse about the mysterious other that is woman, and in particular about cuckoldry. Bouhdiba calls this type of misogynistic sexual poetry, known as *mujūn*, "the art of referring to the most indecent things, speaking about them in such a lighthearted way that one approaches

them with a sort of loose humour" (127). The very lightheartedness and humor that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq employed in the *naqā'iḍ* enabled them to address otherwise taboo topics. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq use misogynistic lampoon as a tool in their poetry to bring the already scathing tone of *naqā'iḍ* poetry to a new level that shocks the audience and holds their attention at the same time. There is something in the taboo topic of sex itself that becomes a comedic element in their poetry.

In the last five lines of Poem 71 al-Farazdaq turns to a direct lampoon of Jarīr. He first satirizes his clan and then asserts his own poetic supremacy. He says,

31 What's wrong with you that you don't count Banū Kulayb

And mourn others with generosity?

32 And your pride, Jarīr, slave that you are

To someone other than your father, is one of the greatest sins.

33 You are striving after nothing, Jarīr.

The poems have gone to the *rāwīs*.

34 How can you reclaim the ones that are in ʿUmān,

And the ones in the famed mountains of Egypt?

35 I beat you , even if you take out your eyes, and strive

With verses of binding and banners. (Bevan 2: 774)

فما لَكَ لا تَعُدُّ بَنى كُلَيْبٍ

وتَنْدُبَ غَيْرَهُمْ بالمَأْثُراتِ

وفَخْرُكَ يا جَريرُ وأَنْتَ عَبْدٌ

لِغَيْرِ أَبيكَ إِحْدى المُنْكَراتِ

تَعَنَّى يا جَريرُ لِغَيْرِ شَيْءٍ

وقَدْ ذَهَبَ القَصائِدُ لِلرُّواتِ

فكَيْفَ تَرُدُّ ما بِعُمانَ مِنْها

وما بِجِبالِ مِصْرَ مُشَهَّراتِ

غَلَبْتُكَ بالمُفَقِّيِ والمُعَنِّى

وبَيْتِ المُحْتَبِى والخافِقاتِ

Al-Farazdaq's lampoon in this poem focuses more on the process of performance than on its content. In line 33 al-Farazdaq says that the poems have gone to the *rāwī*s, i.e., the "reciter[s] and transmitter[s] of poetry" (Jacobi), and in the last line he claims that he has beaten Jarīr with certain types of verses. These lines draw attention to the performance itself, and seem to value the act of performance over the content of the poetry, another indication of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance-oriented lampoon.

The sort of invective contained within these lines is what the *naqā'iḍ* is particularly known for, and although it may sound excessively crass and distasteful to our ears, it must not have to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's contemporaries. Bouhdiba puts this kind of hyperbolically comic-bacchic lampoon in cultural context with a description of some particularly course *mujūn* material written by high Islamic officials. He says, "The western or westernized reader is often shocked by so many obscenities so apparently unworthy of a respectable faqih and a grave minister" (129). Since it is presented in the context of comedy, though, it is acceptable. Jayyusi thinks this type of lampoon "lacks humour, but," she says, "it must have been well received by Umayyad audiences" (412). Whether or not the audience found it humorous, they certainly found it compelling, and Jarīr and al-Farazdaq returned to it again and again throughout the *naqā'iḍ*.

Jarīr begins Poem 72 with a short *nasīb*-like section, in which his wife, Umāma, features as the beloved. Jarīr's *nasīb*esque section is unconventional here, however, since it makes no mention of an abandoned site, and the beloved is not a lost love, but is his wife. In line 9 Jarīr seems to acknowledge—in a small way—al-Farazdaq by mentioning two of the names, al-Aqāriʿ and al-Ḥutāt, al-Farazdaq had included in his list of ancestors at the beginning of Poem 71. The allusion ties the two poems together without the resolution of issue one would expect given the sensibilities of pre-Islamic *hijā'*. The names come in the same position (line 9) in both poems.

9 When the dove, the dove of Najd, is moved with grief,

It announces the death of the neighbor of al-Aqāriʿ and al-Ḥutāt.

10 When the night was disturbed by a sad echo,

He wept mournfully over him until he died. (Bevan 2: 775-776)

إذا طَرِبَ الحَمامُ حَمامُ نَجْدٍ

نَعَى جارَ الأَقارِعِ والحُتاتِ

إذا ما اللَّيْلُ هاجَ صَدًى حَزينًا

بَكَى جَزَعًا عَلَيْهِ إِلَى المَماتِ

Then from line 11 through line 18, Jarīr launches into one of his most commonly used lampoons of al-Farazdaq, that of the latter's being a blacksmith. During this section Jarīr also levels the charge of cowardice against al-Farazdaq (line 18), and goes on to showcase his own and his clan's superiority in battle.

11 Does Laylā's blacksmith boast in the patched

Bellows and the blackened anvil?

12 And your mother, Qufayra, raised you

In a camp of guile among rotting plants.

13 You deceived Zubayr and betrayed him;

Let not Ṭuhayya fear steadfastness!

14 He who is fierce did not fear me;

Let not Ṭuhayya fear my fierceness!

15 When the noble members of the tribe witness my deeds, they reward me;

If I request something of them, they keep to my bidding.

16 It happened that when Banū Qufayra brought me

A blacksmith addicted to the striking of anvils,

17 I left the blacksmith more obedient than a tractable eunuch:

Compliant in his nose ring.

18 Is it from blacksmiths and cowardly women

You hope for high eloquence for Yarbūʿ? (Bevan 2: 776-777)

أَيَفْخَرُ بالمُحَمَّمِ قَيْنُ لَيْلَى

وبالكِيرِ المُرَقَّعِ والعَلاتِ

وأُمُّكُمُ قُفَيْرةُ رَبَّبَتْكُمْ

بِدارِ اللُّؤْمِ فى دِمَنِ النَّباتِ

غَدَرْتُمْ بالزُّبَيْرِ وخُنْتُموهُ

فما تَرْجو طُهَيَّةُ مِنْ ثَباتِ

ولَمْ يَكُ ذو الشَّذاة يَخافُ مِنّى

فما تَرْجو طُهَيَّةُ مِنْ شَذاتى

كِرامُ الحَىِّ إِنْ شَهِدوا كَفَوْنى

وإِنْ وَصَّيْتُهُمْ حَفِظوا وَصاتى

وحانَ بَنو قُفَيْرَةَ إِذْ أَتَوْنى

بِقَيْنٍ مُدْمِنٍ قَرْعَ العَلاتِ

تَرَكْتُ القَيْنَ أَطْوَعَ مِنْ خَصِىٍّ

ذَلولٍ فى خِزامَتِهِ مُؤاتِ

أَبالقَيْنَيْنِ والنَّخَباتِ تَرْجو

لِيَرْبوعٍ شَقاشِقَ باذِخاتِ

This passage illustrates Jarīr's use of satire, which he weaves through a lampoon on al-Farazdaq's tribe. This poetry is tribal, much like pre-Islamic lampoon, with the conceit about al-Farazdaq's blacksmith family, which Jarīr deploys throughout the *naqā'iḍ*.

Following another brief section of boasting, Jarīr raises in line 25 a theme that he repeats many times throughout the *naqā'iḍ*, that of al-Farazdaq's sister Jiʿthin's debauchery.

25 You forgot Jiʿthin's dowry and you sat back.

Woe to you for boasting of your impartiality!

26 Her knees bled from repeated genuflection:

She was bending over, though, not praying.

27 She spent the night getting her two lips penetrated,

Like the manner of the Turks playing ball.

28 The Minqarī put it in her, so she settled down

On his penis as the night lingered.

29 She cries out for Ghālib and the Banū ʿIqāl.

You disgraced your people in the assemblies.

30 We found the Banū ʿIqāl women

In a weak position, targets for spears.

31 These are women viler than asses,

More shameless than idolatrous women.

32 The black of the one who is stripped of a headdress rope

Swears allegiance to anyone who draws near: Take her! Give me that one!

33 You claw with evil nails,

But my rock-solid honor refuses to soften for you.

34 Aren't the Zibriqān most deserving of being shot than asses,

Whenever they are exposed to the archers?

35 The Banū Qurayʿ retained what you lost

For your neighbor so he would not die of hunger.

36 You drew near to Ibn Murra, and you knew;

You drew near and seized the bucket. (Bevan 2: 778-779)

نَسيتُمْ عُقْرَ جِعْثِنَ واحْتَبَيْتُمْ

أَلا تَبًّا لِفَخْرِكَ بالحُباتِ

وقَدْ دَمِيَتْ مَواقِعُ رُكْبَتَيْها

مِنَ التَّبْراكِ لَيْسَ مِنَ الصَّلاتِ

تَبيتُ اللَّيْلَ تُسْلَقُ إِسْكَتاها

كَدَأْبِ التُّرْكِ تَلْعَبُ بالكُراتِ

وحَطَّ المِنْقَرِىُّ بِها فقَرَّتْ

عَلَى أُمِّ القَفا واللَّيْلُ عاتِ

تُنادِى غالِبًا وبَنى عِقالٍ

لَقَدْ أَخْزَيْتِ قَوْمَكِ فى النُّداتِ

وَجَدْنا نِسْوَةً لِبَنى عِقالٍ

بِدارِ الذُّلِّ أَغْراضَ الرُّماتِ

غَوانٍ هُنَّ أَخْبَثُ مِنْ حَميرٍ

وأَمْجَنُ مِنْ نِساءٍ مُشْرِكاتِ

وسَوْداءِ المُجَرَّدِ مِنْ عِقالٍ

تُبايِعُ مَنْ دَنا خُذْها وهاتِ

وأَنْتُمْ تَنْقُرونَ بِظُفْرِ سَوْءٍ

وتَأْبَى أَنْ تَلينَ لَكُمْ صَفاتى

أَلَيْسَ الزِّبْرِقانُ أَحَقَّ عَيْرٍ

بِرَمْيٍ إِذْ تَعَرَّضَ لِلرُّماتِ

تَضَمَّنَ ما أَضَعْتَ بَنو قُرَيْعٍ

لِجارِكَ أَنْ يَموتَ مِنَ الخُفاتِ

تَدَلَّى بِابْنِ مُرَّةَ قَدْ عَلِمْتُمْ

تَدَلَّى ثُمَّ تَنْهَزُ بالدَّلاتِ

This is a long passage dedicated to the topic of Jiʿthin's sexual depravity, a stock theme that recurs frequently throughout the corpus, and so functions on one level to keep the audience in suspense by delaying resolution via repetition. On another level, though, it raises the same topic of female faithlessness al-Farazdaq portrays in lines 25 and 26 of Poem 71. The vivid image of Jiʿthin bloodying her knees from kneeling in a sexual position and the metaphorical description of her sexual organs reveal the extent to which Jarīr and al-Farazdaq use *mujūn* themes throughout their poetry, to reveal anxieties about fidelity through a hyperbolic, comic lampoon.

In al-Farazdaq's opening poem, 71, he had lampooned the women of Jarīr's tribe, and so semantic symmetry would suggest that Jarīr's lampoon of al-Farazdaq's sister, Jiʿthin, is a direct response to al-Farazdaq's attack. A survey of the *naqāʾiḍ*, however, reveals that Jarīr raises the topic of Jiʿthin all throughout the poems, and not always in response to an affront on the women of his tribe. Al-Farazdaq, by contrast, almost never seems to respond directly to Jarīr's lampoons of his sister. Rather, both poets reuse

familiar attacks and avoid directly confronting or dispelling those of their opponents, with the view of prolonging their invective. In the last seven lines of Poem 72 (lines 30 through 36) Jarīr does retaliate in a more direct way to al-Farazdaq's lampoon on the women of his tribe by attacking the women of al-Farazdaq's tribe, although since he does this frequently and not always in response to a like lampoon on the women of Kulayb, this too could be construed as stock language, which suggests that the *naqā'iḍ* were a routine Jarīr and al-Farazdaq had perfected, much like a comedian perfects a stand-up act, to maintain the attention and interest of their audience.

These two poems display many of the characteristics we discussed at the beginning of this chapter that are indicative of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* in general. Many of the same tropes and figures recur within these poems just as they do throughout the corpus. Nor does this dyad seem to present or resolve a specific dispute or problem. Rather, it represents a vehicle for Jarīr and al-Farazdaq to perform in front of an audience. In contrast to this, pre-Islamic lampoon poetry was often very serious—deadly serious in some cases—and carried with it consequences for the losing party.

Poems 102 and 103

The dyad comprising Poems 102 and 103 is as important for the commentary that accompanies it as it is for its content. In Poem 102 al-Farazdaq laments his imprisonment, earned by lampooning Khālid, son of the Caliph Yazīd. Poem 103, Jarīr's

response, contains praise (*madīḥ*) for Khālid, and a plea to release al-Farazdaq from prison. In lines 42 through 44 he says,

42 Do you know what an ungrateful slave is

Whom you released from the long bite of irons?

43 He returns—deviousness having become part of his nature—

Even though he says, “I have made amends, and will not return to my former ways.”

44 So don’t accept this knock-off of a Farazdaq;

He is counterfeit not worth the paper it’s printed on. (Bevan 2: 990)

فهَلْ لَكَ فى عانٍ ولَيْسَ بِشاكِرٍ

فَتُطْلِقَهُ مِنْ طولِ عَضِّ الحَدائِدِ

يَعودُ وكانَ الخُبْثُ مِنْهُ طَبيعَةً

وإِنْ قالَ إِنّي مُعْتِبٌ غَيْرُ عائِدِ

فلا تَقْبَلوا ضَرْبَ الفَرَزْدَقِ إِنَّهُ

هُوَ الزَّيْفُ يَنْفِى ضَرْبَهُ كَلُّ ناقِدِ

This passage illustrates the length Jarīr was willing to go to to continue his performance with al-Farazdaq on the stage of Mirbad, which in this case called for lobbying for the release of his opponent. But he had to take care not to appear sympathetic to al-Farazdaq's cause, or to desire his return for al-Farazdaq's own benefit, since such an appearance would ruin the adversarial role the pair had honed and refined throughout their performances. The following commentary reports on the circumstances surrounding al-Farazdaq's release from prison.

فلمّا أُطْلِقَ قيل له أَنّ ابنَ الخَطَفَى كلّم فيك الأَميرَ حتّى أَطْلَقَك فقال الفَرَزْدَقُ رُدُّونى الى السِّجْن.

> When he was released he was told that Ibn al-Khaṭafā [i.e. Jarīr] petitioned the prince on his behalf that he would release him, to which al-Farazdaq replied, "Return me to prison." (Bevan 2: 991)

This commentary illustrates how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's audience viewed their rapport as performers. Rather than viewing the commentary as a report of the actual circumstances of the incident, though, which we have little chance of discovering at any rate, we may best consider this passage as a piece of lore that reveals the audience's perception of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's rapport. In doing so I follow Suzanne Stetkevych, who treats "prose anecdotes as literary lore rather than historical fact" (*Poetics* 2). This approach is useful because it helps us understand from the audience's point of view the aura Jarīr and al-Farazdaq had created around themselves through their lampoon. If their audience had been convinced that these two poets were engaged in a contest to vindicate their

respective tribes by damaging each other through poetry—in other words if they thought that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's rapport was hateful—a narrative of redemption would be out of place and meaningless. That such a narrative exists shows that the audience viewed Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's rapport as friendlily competitive, and their *naqā'iḍ* a contest of lampoon performance, and not a battle of tribal supremacy that might result in violence.

PERFORMANCE KEYS AND RHETORICAL DEVICES

In addition to the stock devices that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq used to maintain audience interest we may identify further elements in the *naqā'iḍ* that illustrate its performance orientation. I call these elements "performance keys," drawing deliberately on Bauman's (who relies on Bateson here) definition of the term as "a range of explicit or implicit messages which carry instruction on how to interpret the other message(s) being communicated" (*Verbal Art* 15). Bauman's focus is the spectrum between "regular," i.e. non-performative, and performative communication, and the performance keys he mentions, "special codes; figurative language; parallelism [etc.]" (ibid. 16), are meant to distinguish performance from other types of communication. The same methodology can be used to identify internal elements within Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance that hark back to the poetic style of the pre-Islamic lampoon composers.

Scholars have detected such elements in the *naqā'iḍ* of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, but often their approach is fact oriented, i.e. its aim is to "recover" evidence from both

internal and external sources that supports their particular claims about the poets and their poems. Jayyusi is writing in this vein when she identifies a number of innovations in Jarīr's poetry that set him apart from others. She says,

> His greatest services to Umayyad poetry can be summarized in three ways. Firstly, he developed the language, tone and music of poetry, bringing these elements into harmony with current speech and with the quickly developing art of music and singing. Secondly, he composed poetry for popular audiences. Although he was one of the foremost eulogists of the Umayyads, he did more than any other contemporary poet to popularize poetry and make it a successful vehicle of entertainment for the public. This he accomplished mainly in his satires. Thirdly, it was also in his satires that he introduced, with considerable success, humorous imagery and witty invective. This was a real achievement in view of the tendency of most classical poetry before him to assume a serious, dogmatic and sometimes even a grave tone. (Jayyusi, 409)

Hussein also notes Jarīr's pioneering spirit by his incorporation of harsh invective into lampoon poetry. He says, "In many poems by Jarīr, one finds several crude images and sometimes rude expressions" (508). He attributes this to Jarīr's personality, saying, "Apparently, Jarīr's use of his impolite images and expressions reflects his own character" (509). What both Jayyusi and Hussein fail to point out, though, is that the innovative techniques Jarīr and al-Farazdaq incorporated into the *naqā'iḍ* supported their

performance approach to lampoon poetry. Whether or not Jarīr incorporated course language into his poetry on account of his character, is not only unknowable, but is beside the point. What these elements that Jayyusi and Hussein have identified do reveal is a poetry that functioned as performance-oriented lampoon.

Bauman says that "one must determine empirically what are the specific conventionalized means that key performance in a particular community" (*Verbal Art* 22). Badawi identifies archaic language as one of the features that characterize post facto reenactments of pre-Islamic diction.[51] By adapting Bauman's methodology to Badawi we may identify archaism, then, as a technique Jarīr and al-Farazdaq used for keying their performance: a performance key. A great amount of archaic language may be identified by investigating instances within Abū ʿUbayda's *sharḥ* where the commentator explains a presumably archaic term or phrase. Examples of this are ubiquitous throughout the *naqā'iḍ*, and are far too numerous to attempt a comprehensive compilation. I list a small sampling here to give an idea of the kinds of archaic terminology Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* contain.

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[51] He says, "For obvious political and religious reasons it was an article of faith with some Abbasid Caliphs to provide their children with a solid grounding in Islam and the relevant sciences, including philosophy and knowledge of ancient poetry. To please their patrons, therefore, poets had to write panegyrics that satisfied their patrons' criteria of excellence: i.e. works that showed their mastery of the language and of the old Pre-Islamic poetic tradition, in which allusions and obscure and archaic words abounded" (12).

In Poem 39, line 48 al-Farazdaq says, "*yahizu l-harāniʿa*," which Abū ʿUbayda says means, "to remove the lice (i.e. from his testicles, "*al-khuṣay*")" (Bevan 1: 199).[52] Abū ʿUbayda tells us in line 74 of Poem 47 that "*arūm*" means "origin."[53] From Poem 63, line 31, we read "*arʿan*," which Abū ʿUbayda explains means "an army having a large number of people and weapons" (ibid. 289).[54] And in Poem 81, line 8, we learn that "*marmūsa*" means "buried; interred" (Bevan 2: 822).[55]

In addition to archaic language we find too in the *naqāʾiḍ* further indications of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's use of rhetorical devices to capture the audience's attention and maintain their interest in the performance. Among these is anaphora. Poem 66 is a good example of this. In poem 65 Jarīr boasts of his clan's military prowess and mocks the lowliness of al-Farazdaq's "blacksmith" clan, and satirizes its women. Whereas Jarīr begins Poem 65 with a traditional *nasīb* section, al-Farazdaq wastes no time countering Jarīr's claims of tribal superiority by beginning each of the first seven lines of Poem 66 with the phrase "*minnā*," "from us," which denies Jarīr's assertions of genealogical importance by emphasizing his own clan's greatness.

1 From us comes the one who was chosen generous among men,

And best when the violent winds blew;

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52 قوله يَهزُ الهَرانعَ يعنى يَنْزِعُ القَمْلَ

53 قوله أرومُها يعنى أَصْلها

54 قوله بأَرْعَنَ يعنى جيشًا كثيرَ الاهلِ والسِّلاحِ

55 قوله مَرْموسَة يعنى مدفونة

2 From us comes the one whom the Messenger gave gifts

To prisoners of Tamīm with teary eyes;

3 From us comes the one who gives hundreds and buys expensive things,

Whose merit lights up the one who defends;

4 From us comes a speechmaker who speaks without fault, standard bearer,

Brilliant when the men turned to him;

5 From us comes one who brought back to life the buried daughter, and Ghālib,

And ʿAmr, and from us Ḥājib and al-Aqāriʿ;

6 From us on the morning of fear, come raiding youths,

When their hands raised iron swords;

7 From us comes the one who drove horses until their hoofs pained them

To Najrān where the camels greeted them in the morning.

(Bevan 2: 696-698)

مِنّا الَّذى اخْتِيرَ الرِّجالَ سَماحَةً

وخَيْرًا إِذا هَبَّ الرِّياحُ الزَّعازِعُ

ومِنّا الَّذى أَعْطَى الرَّسولُ عَطِيَّةً

أُسارَى تَميمٍ والعُيونُ دَوامِعُ

ومِنّا الَّذى يُعْطِى المائينَ ويَشْتَرِى الـ

غَوالِى ويَعْلُو فَضْلُهُ مَنْ يُدافِعُ

ومِنّا خَطيبٌ لا يُعابُ وحامِلٌ

أَغَرُّ إِذا التَفَّتْ عَلَيْهِ المَجامِعُ

ومِنّا الَّذى أَحْيَى الوَئِيدَ وغالِبٌ

وعَمْرٌو ومِنّا حاجِبٌ والأَقارِعُ

ومِنّا غَداةَ الرَّوْعِ فِتْيانُ غارَةٍ

إِذا مَتَعَتْ تَحْتَ الزِّجاجِ الأَشاجِعُ

ومِنّا الَّذى قادَ الجِيادَ عَلَى الوَجا

لِنَجْرانَ حَتَّى صَبَّحَتْها النَّزائِعُ

Al-Farazdaq follows this with the following line:

8 These are my fathers; Bring me their like

When the times of gathering bring us together, Jarīr! (ibid. 699)

أُولئكَ آباءِى فجِئْنى بِمِثْلِهِمْ

إِذا جَمَعَتْنا يا جَريرُ المَجامِعُ

In the first seven lines al-Farazdaq catches the audience's attention with the repeated phrase at the beginning of each line. In line 8 he ties the first seven together masterfully with a verse that functions as a challenge… to a lampoon contest at Mirbad. "Bring me their like!"—"Come join me in my game, Jarīr."—"When the crowds bring us together."—"At our next show at Mirbad."

Chapter 5

Direction and Focus of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's Performance

INTRODUCTION

In the pre-Islamic era *naqā'iḍ* poetry performed the specific function of settling tribal conflicts. Poets, representing their respective tribes or clans, would perform a linguistic battle, which sometimes substituted for or formed the preliminary to an actual battle (cf. Van Gelder, *Naḳāʾiḍ*). The winner of this contest determined the superiority of his clan or tribe and gained concomitant benefits; the loser paid the consequences. During the Umayyad era, though, the function of *naqā'iḍ* poetry was transitioning away from a contest that decided the outcome of tribal disputes, which were becoming rarer than they had been in the pre-Islamic era. This shift in function was accompanied by a similar shift in the focus of the performance.

In pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* poetry each poet focused his performance on vaunting his own tribe and attacking that of his opponent to the gratification of the members of his own tribe who were spectating. These poets had little hope of winning over members of their opponent's tribe. In Umayyad-era lampoon poetry, however, poets were more commonly vying for the attention of the same audience, who gathered, in the case of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, at Mirbad. This shifted the poets' focus away from each other and towards their mutual audience before whom they strove to manage their image. Through an examination of both external (*akhbār*) and internal (Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*)

sources I will show that the shift in function that occurred in the *naqā'iḍ* genre was accompanied by a shift in the direction of performance of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ*, from a poet-oriented performance to an audience-oriented one. In the former the focus is on the poets themselves, who as opponents, direct their invective towards each other in an attempt to win the contest by besting the other. In the latter the focus shifts more towards the audience. The poets still lampoon each other, but their focus is the audience, for whose attention they are vying. The "winner" of the Umayyad-era contest gains recognition from the audience and an ability to exert influence over them. In the case of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq they were not trying to beat each other so much as they were trying to win, mutually, the attention of their audience. Managing the impression they were giving their audience, therefore, became an important part of their performance.

I divide the chapter into two parts. In the first I use *akhbār* samples to show the perceived directional shift that occurred in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* performance. In the second section I analyze passages from Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* that not only demonstrate this shift, but show how Jarīr and al-Farazdaq managed their image for the audience.

PERCEIVED DIRECTION OF PERFORMANCE IN THE *NAQĀ'IḌ*

A *khabar* (pl. *akhbār*) is a "report, piece of information" (Wensinck). The literary genre of *akhbār* includes reports and anecdotes on a large variety of topics, but the *akhbār* I adduce in this section illustrate Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's reception by their audience as it has been historically viewed, and show that the direction of their performance was audience oriented. In examining these *akhbār* it is useful to consider conventions of the form in its historical context. Samer Ali notes that whereas "in the modern era we tend to think of history and historiography as a form of scholarship…people in medieval Arabo-Islamic culture and indeed in most medieval cultures tended to think of historical narrative as an organic fruit of artistic performance…" (*Literary Salons* 36). He calls it "a misplaced assumption that medieval audiences share with the positivists the same standards of authenticity for historical narratives" (ibid. 37). If we are to understand the context of the *akhbār* sources that report on medieval poets and performances, we must acknowledge this difference in point of view even if the *akhbār* sources we use, or some of them, do not accord with our own modern standards of authenticity. Our concern is the perception of truth about Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performances that was meaningful to their audience.

In adopting this methodology I deliberately reject a source-critical approach to medieval Islamic history, which Ali explains, "has disapproved of the crafted nature of narratives." He continues, "This view concludes that literary devices make it clear that 'transmitters and collectors invented and circulated reports on a large scale'" (*Literary*

Salons 37). This view fails to consider the value of the "invented and circulated reports." These very reports often give us the clearest picture of how an event—in this case Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance of the *naqā'iḍ*—was perceived. The source-critical approach has militated against a full and artistic interpretation of a great amount of (medieval) Arabic poetry because of its tendency to "recover facts" only and ignore other aspects of the poetry. With this object in view, scholars have extensively "mined" medieval Arabic poetry for "useful" information, often in complete ignorance of the original significance—to say nothing of the artistry—of the verses. The entry on the *qaṣīda* from the second edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam* demonstrates the unfortunate traditional view on the hermeneutic tradition of classical Arabic poetry. At one point it says,

> The Arabic *ḳaṣīda* is a very conventional piece of verse, with one rhyme, whatever its length, and in a uniform metre. Consequently, the charm and originality of certain of the themes employed cannot prevent boredom and monotony from reigning over these never-ending poems. (*Kaṣīda*)

This, shockingly, is an improvement over the entry of the same term in the first edition of the *Encyclopedia of Islam*, which reads,

> An Arabic… *ḳaṣīda* is a very artificial composition; the same rhyme has to run through the whole of the verses, however long the poem may be. In addition the composition is bound by a metre which the poet has to guard most scrupulously

> through the whole course of the poem. The result is that we cannot expect much beautiful poetry…. [W]hen the same descriptions recur in endless poems expressed in the same manner, only with different words, the monotony becomes nauseous. (Sells, 308)

My position on interpreting *akhbār* sources focuses not on unknowable facts, but on the perception later generations held toward Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performances.

The purpose of using *akhbār* that describe Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance habits and circumstances is to understand how the poets related to their audience in the view of the *khabar* reporters (crafters). I have chosen a number of examples from *Kitāb al-Aghānī* and other sources that indicate the shift in the direction of performance away from a poet-to-poet approach and towards a poet-to-audience one. This shift emphasizes the importance of the audience to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance and reveals a high level of interaction between poets and audience.

An audience-focused performance presupposes an audience, and there are a number of sources in *Kitāb al-Aghānī* that discuss the audience and their relationship to the poets. In one example we learn that al-Farazdaq had his own spot at Mirbad. Even more striking we find in this example that there were regular spots for the people who comprised his audience as well.

> And it happened that then he knew that the people were sitting in their seats at Mirbad, and his spot and the spot of al-Farazdaq were known. (Al-Iṣfahānī, 1992 8: 34)
>
> أَصْبح, حتى إذا عَرف أن الناس قد جلسوا في مجالسهم بالمِرْبَد, وكان يُعرَف مجلسه ومجلس الفَرَزْدَق.

The significance of the availability of regular spots for the audience is not primarily that audience members had to find their own place to witness the performance, although one could speculate that audience accommodations suggests a focus on their needs, which in turn suggests their indispensability to the performance. The perception of regular seats sheds light on our understanding of Mirbad's function. It was a market, but a set aside space suggests that at least in Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's time an important function of Mirbad was as a venue for a performance in which the audience played an important part. Beyond that the *khabar* says that the people were sitting in *their* seats, not any seats that happened to be there, but their own seats. It is important to note here that the tendency to attach possessive pronouns to nouns is not as common in Arabic as it is in English. Therefore, the *khabar* could have said, "*al-majālis*" (the seats) to convey nearly the identical sense the English "their seats" carries. The use of "*majālisihim*" suggests a focus on ownership of seats, which in turn reveals that they were perceived to be the regular seats of the audience who frequented them. This points to a convention of seating at Mirbad, where the same audience (at least some members) habitually gathered to observe Jarīr and al-Farazdaq act out the spectacle of lampoon performance. This

khabar's visualization of a regular audience at Mirbad highlights their importance to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's performance. They, and not the poets, are the focus of the performance in this *khabar*.

The following *khabar* also portrays Mirbad as a venue of performance. This is significant because Mirbad was central to the act of performance, as it provided Jarīr and al-Farazdaq a stage on which to perform. The following example shows that this is one of the common roles Mirbad was perceived to have enjoyed.

> This is Ru'ba at Mirbad, sitting and making his poetry heard and reciting for the people. (Al-Iṣfahānī, 1992 10: 184)

هذا رؤبةُ بالمِرْبَد يجلس فيُسمع شعرَه ويُنْشِد الناسَ.

This example highlights the perceived relationship between audience and performer at Mirbad, and highlights the venue as a catalyst for the audience-centered performance Jarīr and al-Farazdaq participated in. The performer in this example is conscious of his audience, and is performing for *them*, and not for an *opponent* or *another performer*. This suggests a focus of performance towards an audience more than an opponent, a shift from typical mortally-serious pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ*.

The following *khabar* is significant to an audience-oriented performance because it shows how the relationship between the audience and poet was perceived.

> The people came to al-Farazdaq and informed him that they had seen a structure over the tomb of Ghālib, his father. Then he approached al-Farazdaq while at Mirbad…. (21: 401)

فقدم الناس على الفرزدق فأخبروه أنهم رأوا بناء على قبر غالب أبيه, ثم قدم عليه, وهو بالمِرْبد...

There are several points related to centrality of the audience that this *khabar* emphasizes. First, the reporter makes sure to point out that al-Farazdaq is at Mirbad, significant because of its role as a performance venue. In addition to this the audience is perceived to play a significant role in the exchange. They approach al-Farazdaq, or draw near to him, which emphasizes their presence and proximity to the performer. They also interact with him directly. Perhaps by telling him about the structure over his father's grave, they were goading him into performing poetry. In another report al-Farazdaq is again approached by a group of people who ask him to recite.

> And when al-Farazdaq approached Mecca the people craned their necks to see him, and he came to the house of the Banū ʿAbdallāh ibn al-Zubayr, and they asked him to recite…. (Al-Iṣfahānī, *Alwaraq* 2418).

فلما قدم الفرزدق مكة اشرأب الناس إليه, ونزل على بني عبد الله بن الزبير, فاستنشدوه...

The salient piece of information here is that people were eager for al-Farazdaq to recite. This portrays a perception by later generations that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetic process was interactive, a performance in which the audience played a significant role. This

contrasts with many pre-Islamic contests where lampoon was undertaken to solve a serious and specific conflict.

In the following *khabar* Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are portrayed reciting for an audience. The poets ask the audience directly their opinion about their poetry.

> And it [the poetry] pleased the people, and so they [Jarīr and al-Farazdaq] recited for them…and Jarīr asked us, "Did those lines please you?" And they responded, "Yes." (Iṣfahānī, *Alwaraq* 829).

فأعجب الناس وتناشدوها..فقال لنا جريرٌ: أعجبتكم هذه الأبيات؟ قالوا: نعم.

In this *khabar* Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are shown involving their audience in critiquing their performance. The level of audience involvement Jarīr and al-Farazdaq invite their audience to participate in here hints that the poets were perceived primarily as reciting for their audience, and only secondarily against each other. This illustrates a perception held by later generations as reflected by the *khabar* that the lampoon of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq had different expectations for and requirements of an audience in the changing milieu of the Umayyad period. In the context of a pre-Islamic lampoon performance we would expect the poets to address each other, focus on each other, and in general try to outdo each other for the advancement of their own tribe in the manner of true opponents. Here the performers are shown shifting their focus away from each other and towards the audience, which shifts the contest away from a serious conflict and towards an audience-oriented performance. Interaction with the audience is important because Jarīr and al-

Farazdaq are less concerned with beating each other than with attracting and maintaining their audience's attention in order to influence them. Presumably if the audience had responded in the negative to Jarīr's inquiry, he would have adjusted his performance to win them over.

The foregoing examples from various *akhbār* reveal a new perception of the relationship Jarīr and al-Farazdaq had with their audience. Instead of primarily opposing each other as pre-Islamic lampoon poets might have done, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were performing to try to elicit a certain kind of reaction, and the *akhbār* passages show a perceived shift in that direction. This perception demonstrates that later generations accepted Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* more as a performance for performance's sake than as a serious contest that set out to resolve tribal conflicts.

JARĪR AND AL-FARAZDAQ'S IMAGE MANAGEMENT BEFORE THEIR AUDIENCE

Audience-oriented lampoon implies a shift in focus away from the competing poets and towards the audience. This contrasts with the primary focus of pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ* in which poets directed their performance towards each other in an effort to score against their opponent. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were performing for their audience in order to influence them through their performance by portraying a specific image of themselves and of their opponent. They controlled the perception their audience had of them and

managed their image by information their lampoon "gave off" about themselves. The concept of "giving off" information was suggested by Goffman, who says,

> The expressiveness of the individual (and therefore his capacity to give impressions) appears to involve two radically different kinds of sign activity: the expression that he gives, and the expression that he gives off. The first involves verbal symbols or their substitutes which he uses admittedly and solely to convey the information that he and the others are known to attach to these symbols. This is communication in the traditional and narrow sense. The second involves a wide range of action that others can treat as symptomatic of the actor, the expectation being that the action was performed for reasons other than the information conveyed in this way. (*Presentation of Self* 2)

Goffman considers only non-verbal communication (actions) to be "given off." It is likely that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq acted similarly before their audience, giving them knowing winks, bows, nods and everything else we might expect to accompany a live performance. But for our purposes we may adapt Goffman's model to consider as well the verbal messages Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were "giving off" through the course of their poetry. The lampoon poetry they performed involved accusing each other, lampooning each other and boasting of themselves and of their tribe. These accusations, lampoons and vaunts are considered "given" information, and are directed toward the opponent, but this same performance against the opponent ("given" to him) "gives off" important

information to the audience. Through this Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were able to manage their image vis-à-vis the latter. The following passages from the *naqā'iḍ* illustrate efforts on Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's part to "give off" information to their audience about themselves and each other in order to manage their image before the audience.

Poems 102 and 103, perhaps more than any other in the corpus, illustrate the shift in direction of performance from "poet to poet" to "poet to audience." Not only is this dyad a lampoon contest between Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, but each poem is also a panegyric (*madīḥ*) for Khalid ibn ʿAbdallāh, son of the Caliph Yazīd. In Poem 102 al-Farazdaq says,

7 Increase Khalid like he in whose right hand

You find the best defender of Islam! (Bevan 2: 982)

فزِدْ خالِدًا مِثْلَ الَّذى فى يَمينِهِ

تَجِدْهُ عِنِ الإسْلامِ مِنْ خَيْرِ ذائِدِ

Jarīr, speaking also of Khalid, says similarly in line 22 of Poem 103,

22 You protected the frontiers of the Muslims; You did not lose ground.

And you are still the leading chief, son of a leader. (ibid. 988)

حَمَيْتَ ثُغورَ المُسْلِمينَ فلَمْ تُضِعْ

وما زِلْتَ رَأْسًا قائِدًا وابْنَ قائِدِ

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are shown here each competing for the attention and admiration of Khalid and the court. This represents a marked contrast from pre-Islamic *naqā'iḍ*, where each poet was speaking mostly to his own tribe. Here, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are competing for the attention of the same group of people: they share a common audience. By praising the reigning Islamic leader (or his son) Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are managing their image in relation to Khalid before their audience. They are "giving off" an acknowledgment of the Islamic state's authority, at the same time they are vying for the attention of the audience.

In many passages throughout the *naqā'iḍ* we observe Jarīr and al-Farazdaq managing their image regarding their standing within their tribe. Since Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were both from the tribe of Tamīm, their focus is less on inter-tribal conflict than on intra-tribal superiority. The following passages contain instances of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq "giving off" information to their audience about their station within that group. In Poem 51 al-Farazdaq boasts that he is Tamīm's defender and son.

99 I protected Tamīm from you, for I am its son

And a well-known rider when the occasion arises.

100 I am the son of Tamīm and the defender at its back,

Whenever a criminal surrenders the honor of kinship's bonds.

(Bevan 1: 379)

مَنَعْتُ تَميمًا مِنْكَ أَنّى أَنا ابْنُها

وراحِلُها المَعْروفُ عِنْدَ المَواسِمِ

أَنا ابْنُ تَميمٍ والمُحامِى وَراءَها

إِذا أَسْلَمَ الجانى ذِمارَ المَحارِمِ

In these lines al-Farazdaq makes the case that he represents Tamīm. In line 100 al-Farazdaq says that he would defend Tamīm even if a criminal should give up the honor of the bonds of kinship. One supposes the criminal he has in mind is Jarīr, who al-Farazdaq intimates, is all too ready to give up the honor of the bonds of kinship (*maḥārim*).[56] In a pre-Islamic tribal contest of *naqā'iḍ*, there would have been little use for a poet to defend his position in front of his own tribe, since they would have presumably supported him by default. Instead of having two poets, each from a different tribe, lampooning their opponent's tribe, each with the support of an audience made up of supporters of his own tribe, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were both from the same tribe of Tamīm, and both shared a common audience. Al-Farazdaq is attempting here to procure the attention of the audience for himself, to win them over by promoting himself over Jarīr as Tamīm's legitimate son and defender, "giving off" the impression that there is really no battle

56 This meaning of *maḥram*/*maḥārim* is according to Bevan (3: 330).

between tribes, that the new kind of lampoon they are performing is centered less on whose tribe is superior and more on who is the most convincing performer.

In Poem 53 Jarīr boasts of his own affiliation with Tamīm. In the lines leading up to 94 Jarīr vaunts the heroes of Tamīm, then says,

94 If the Banū Tamīm were angry with you,

You considered all men angry. (Bevan 1: 449)

إذا غَضِبَتْ عَلَيْكَ بَنو تَميمٍ

حَسِبْتَ النّاسَ كُلَّهُمُ غِضابا

In saying that al-Farazdaq thought all men were angry with him if Tamīm was, Jarīr is "giving off" information about Tamīm's overawing power, enough to make al-Farazdaq quake at the thought of provoking it. By placing al-Farazdaq in opposition to Tamīm Jarīr suggests that he is not part of the tribe, precluding any possibility of his being its legitimate representative. Jarīr places al-Farazdaq with other non-Tamīmites in order to manage his image before the audience, implying that he is a more suitable representative than al-Farazdaq. This is another instance of the poets' efforts to engage with an audience whose attention they are vying for, and to manage their image vis-à-vis the latter. Al-Farazdaq wastes no time responding to Jarīr's boast of his position within the Tamīm tribe, saying in the first line of Poem 54,

1 I am son of Banū Tamīm, the defenders,

When the greatest of calamities overtakes it. (Bevan 1: 451)

أَنا ابْنُ العاصِمينَ بَنى تَميمٍ

إذا ما أَعْظَمُ الحدثانِ نابا

Jarīr had said earlier the he was Tamīm's son, and al-Farazdaq says it here. The word choice is significant. Al-Farazdaq could have chosen another term that conveyed the sense of "defender," "representative," or "hero." By choosing "*ibn*," though, he focuses on paternity, and his blood relationship to the Banū Tamīm. This is a metaphor for the shifting tribal relationships in the Umayyad period. In pre-Islamic times the poet representative of the tribe might have been a son "*ibn*" of the tribe, whether literal or adopted (cf. Smith, 142), and would have competed with a poet from a different tribe. Here, though, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are competing within the same tribe to manage the image of their legitimacy by the information they "give off." This highlights the important point that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were not only vaunting their own tribe as against that of their opponent, but were also vying for legitimacy within the same tribe, fighting for a certain image before the audience.

Another theme running through the *naqā'iḍ* that illustrates Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's audience-oriented lampoon is the topic of Islam. The establishment of the Islamic state represents one of many markers of gradual change as the pre-Islamic era gave way to

Umayyad-era society. The poets strove to manage their image regarding the new state by "giving off" information to their audience related to the topic of Islam. In Poem 35 Jarīr mentions Muhammad, saying,

15 I appeal to the throne of God, Muhammad's master,

To gather the people or bring them from afar. (Bevan 1: 174)

رَغِبْتُ إِلى ذى العَرْشِ مَوْلَى مُحَمَّدٍ

لِيَجْمَعَ شَعْبًا أَوْ يُقَرِّبَ نائِيا

Jarīr's appeal (information "given") implies to his audience that he is a devout Muslim (information "given off"). This in turn signals his recognition of the legitimacy of the Islamic state in his performance to an audience who is presumed to have familiarity with Islamic legitimacy. In Poem 51 it is al-Farazdaq who mentions the Prophet. The poem begins with his reminiscing on Medina.

1 My mount longs for the market of Medina

With the longing of a she-camel bereft of her young.

2 And I wish the market of Medina were

By the trenches of Falj or on the shores of Kawāẓim. (Bevan 1: 343)

تَحِنُّ بِزَوْراءِ المَدينَةِ ناقَتى

حَنينَ عَجولٍ تَبْتَغِى البَوَّ رائِمِ

ويا لَيْتَ زَوْراءَ المَدينَةِ أَصْبَحَتْ

بِأَحْفارِ فَلْجٍ أَوْ بِسيفِ الكَواظِمِ

Then, in line 14 he says,

14 Blessed be the hands of him who follows Muhammad

And his two neighbors and he who fasting for God was wronged!

(ibid. 345)

بِخَيْرِ يَدَىْ مَنْ كانَ بَعْدَ مُحَمَّدٍ

وجارَيْهِ والمَظْلومِ لِلّهِ صائِمِ

The longing for Medina in the first lines is reminiscent of the traditional *nasīb* section of the *qaṣīda* in which the abandoned campsite is recalled with yearning. By replacing *dār* (campsite) with the city of Medina, al-Farazdaq suggests an appropriation of tribal ways by the Islamic state. He does not state this directly, but the substitution of "Medina" for "*dār*" implies it, or "gives it off." The praise for the Prophet in line 14 only reinforces this idea. In Poem 96 al-Farazdaq boasts even that the Prophet and he share a common genealogy. He says,

25 From us comes the Prophet Muhammad;

And blindness is dispelled with a faithful command. (Bevan 2: 913)

مِنّا النَّبِيُّ مُحَمَّدٌ يُجْلَى بِهِ

عَنَّا العَمَى بِمُصَدَّقٍ مَأْمورِ

Instead of claiming a tribal lineage, al-Farazdaq is here suggesting a shared lineage with Muhammad, and through him with Islam, another implicit ("given off") recognition of Islamic legitimacy, and another illustration of the waning of tribal authority.

In Poem 104 Jarīr launches an attack against al-Farazdaq centered on the latter's propensity for infidelity. This is not the only instance in which Jarīr accuses, or all but accuses, al-Farazdaq of being a closet Christian, but it is one of the most extensive and focused lampoons of this nature.

43 How God disapproves of al-Farazdaq

Whenever he prays and performs the *takbīr*!

44 And you, if you gave al-Farazdaq a dirham

For the Christian woman's religion, he would convert to it.

45 So let him not approach the two Marwas nor Ṣafā,

Nor the pure and sacred mosque of God! (Bevan 2: 996)

أَلا قَبَحَ اللهُ الفَرَزْدَقَ كُلَّما

أَهَلَّ مُهِلٌّ بالصَّلوةِ وكَبَّرا

فإِنَّكَ لَوْ تُعْطِى الفَرَزْدَقَ دِرْهَمًا

عَلَى دِينِ نَصْرانِيَّةٍ لَتَنَصَّرا

فلا يَقْرَبَنَّ المَرْوَتَيْنِ ولا الصَّفا

ولا مَسْجِدَ اللهِ الحَرامَ المُطَهَّرا

Jarīr's lampoon of al-Farazdaq in his devotion to Islam hints at a new discourse of piety in Umayyad society. Jarīr and al-Farazdaq are paying homage to the new vernacular by presenting topics such as these in their *naqā'iḍ*. By accusing al-Farazdaq of Christian tendencies, Jarīr is addressing his audience, and managing his image by "giving off" the impression that he, as a non-Christian, is in line with the new discourse and vocabulary of the Umayyad period.

The preceding instances and examples demonstrate that Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's *naqā'iḍ* performance was perceived by later generations as a game of lampoon that was audience oriented, a marked shift from the pre-Islamic variety whose focus was more on the contestants than on the audience. I have also shown that in addition to either lampooning their opponent, boasting of themselves, or praising another, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were also managing their image by "giving off" information to their audience as they were "giving" lampoon against each other. Their message was largely one that reflected the realities of life in a new culture with new social mores and foci. This

message resonated with their audience because it addressed the social changes of their urbanizing time.

Conclusion

Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry spoke to their audience not only because the topics they addressed were relevant to their new urban culture, but because their skillful composition and performance attracted their audience's attention and drew them in, and in the process gained the poets a measure of control over their audience. The more relevant, skillful and appealing Jarīr and al-Farazdaq became, the more they were able to exercise influence over their audience. Samer Ali explains, "Performers of verbal art were both admired and feared for their capacity to stimulate the emotional participation of their audiences and thereby influence the emergence of new relations of power and privilege" (*Literary Salons* 123). With the admiration (and fear?) of their audience, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's power and authority grew. This enabled them to perform for their audience a new discourse of negotiating tribal relations in the urbanizing culture of the Umayyad period. Ali, speaking here of *madḥ* (praise) poetry, says, "The poet exercised a power, recognized by others, to make culture and identity; he reconfigured the community's values, aspirations, anxieties, and ideals by projecting a coveted model of nobility" (*Literary Salons* 86). Although Jarīr and al-Farazdaq were not practicing *madḥ* poetry (in this case), and so were not "projecting a coveted model of nobility," they were influencing their audience as they negotiated changing tribal relations in the face of society's new values and culture. This placed them on the margins of mainstream society. Bauman notes the tendency able performers have to do this.

> The consideration of the power inherent in performance to transform social structure opens the way to a range of additional considerations concerning the role of the performer in society. Perhaps there is a key here to the persistently documented tendency for performers to be both admired and feared—admired for their artistic skill and power and for the enhancement of experience they provide, feared because of the potential they represent for subverting and transforming the status quo. Here too may lie a reason for the equally persistent association between performers and marginality or deviance, for in the special emergent quality of performance the capacity for change may be highlighted and made manifest to the community…If change is conceived of in opposition to the conventionality of the community at large, then it is only appropriate that the agents of that change be placed away from the center of that conventionality, on the margins of society. (*Verbal Art* 45)

Both for the power they exhibited over their audience and for their manipulation of the *naqā'iḍ* genre in Umayyad society, Jarīr and al-Farazdaq defied conventionality, invented a new way to present an old type of poetry, and gained an audience that was eager to hear what the poets had to say.

The influence of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry is still being felt today. The poets' longevity is attested by colloquial fame. The quotation, "Without the poetry of al-

Farazdaq, one third of the language of the Arabs would be lost,"[57] is common enough to be known even by Arabic speakers who have little acquaintance with Arabic poetry in general. This assertion is backed by a number of personal experiences such as one that occurred at a reception of Arabic scholars at which one of the participants asked me the topic of my dissertation. When I told him that it focused on Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's corpus of *naqā'iḍ*, he proceeded to quote to me this line of al-Farazdaq's. Other similar instances have occurred, in which this line of al-Farazdaq's is quoted. One need go no further than popular social media fora: Facebook has a page dedicated to Jarīr and al-Farazdaq, and the poets are mentioned on Twitter as well.

If Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's specific influence is widely felt even today, the spirit of their lampoon lives on in even greater abundance. Witness the numerous lampooning genres that allow performers to display their skill in a hyperbolically comedic lampoon contest. Perhaps the best example of this is found in the popular Dozens contests we investigated in Chapter Two. In modern America we also have the popular genre of celebrity "roasting," a public humiliation of a famous person whose hyperbolic comedy recalls that both of the *naqā'iḍ* and of the (Roman) *facetiae*.

This dissertation represents a first, and necessary, step in the study of Umayyad-era Arabic poetry. The methods of analysis I use, although common in the analysis of "Western" literature, have only gained slow acceptance in Arabic literature. Further

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57 لو لا شعرُ الفرزدق لذهب ثلث لغة العرب *(Al-Iṣfahānī*, 1973 21: 395).

research on the performance, function and social impact of Jarīr and al-Farazdaq's poetry, and of Umayyad poetry in general, is sorely needed. It is my hope that this "first step" will improve our understanding of early Arabo-Islamic society and the role of lampoon in reflecting and driving societal changes of the Umayyad era. If we are closer to integrating the field of Arabic literature into the broader humanities, the effort has not been in vain.

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